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TWO DISCOURSES;

VIZ.

A DISCOURSE OF TRUTH.

By the late Reverend Dr. *RUST*, Lord Bishop of *Dromore* in the Kingdom of *Ireland*.

The Way of HAPPINESS And SALVATION.

By *Joseph Glanvil*, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *James Collins*, in the *Temple*-passage from *Essex-Street*. 1677.

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A DISCOURSE OF TRUTH.

By the late Reverend

Dr. *RUST*,

Lord Bishop of *Dromore* in the Kingdom of *Ireland*.

Together with a LETTER, giving an Account of the Author and the Book:

Written by *JOS. GLANVIL*, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed for *James Collins*, in the New *Temple*-passage from *Essex*-street, 1677.

A DISCOURSE OF TRUTH.

A

LETTER

Concerning the

Subject and the *Author*.

SIR,

I Have now peruſed, and returned the Manuſcript you ſent me; it had contracted many and great Errours in the Tranſcription, which I have corrected: I was enabled to do it by a written Copy of the ſame Diſcourſe which I have had divers years in my Hands. The Subject is of great and weighty

importance, and the Acknowledgment of the Truths here asserted and made good, will lay a Foundation for right conceptions in the Doctrines that concern the Decrees *of God, For the first Errour, which is the ground of the rest, is, That things are good and just, because God Wills them so to be; and if that be granted, we are disabled from using the arguments taken from natural Notions, and the Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature, against the Blackest and most Blasphemous Opinions that ever were entertained concerning Gods proceedings with the Sons of Men. If there be no settled Good and Evil, Immutable and Independent on any Will or understanding, then God may have made his*

his reaſonable Creatures on purpoſe to damn them for ever. He may have abſolutely decreed that they ſhould ſin, that he may damn them juſtly; He may moſt ſolemnly and earneſtly prohibit Sin by his Laws, and declare great diſpleaſure againſt it; and yet by his ineluctable Decrees Force men to all the ſin that is committed in the World: He may vehemently proteſt his unfeigned deſire of their Life and Happineſs, and at the ſame time, ſecretly reſolve their Eternal Deſtruction; He may make it his Glory and Pleaſure to triumph eternally in the torments of poor Worms, which himſelf hath by his unalterable and irreſiſtible Will made miſerable; yea (as the diſcourſe inſtanceth) he may after his De-

crees concerning the Salvation of the Elect, after the death of his Son for them, and the miſſion of his Spirit to them, and after all the promiſes he hath made to aſſure them; thruſt them *alſo at laſt into the dreadful Regions of Death and Woe; I ſay if there be no immutable reſpects in things, but Juſt and Unjuſt, Honourable and Diſhonourable, Good and Cruel, Faithful and Deceitful, are reſpects made by meer arbitrarious will, it will be in vain to diſpute from Them againſt any ſuch diſmal Opinions: yea it will be great folly to argue for the Simplicity of the Divine Nature againſt the vile conceits of the old* Anthropomorphites, *and the Blaſphemies of the preſent* Muggletonians, *of* God's *having*

ving a Corporal ſhape, Parts and Members, if there be no neceſſary Independent Connexion, Immenſity, Spirituality and Perfection; but this being eſtabliſh'd, that there are immutable reſpects in things, and that ſuch and ſuch are Perfections, and their contrary Defects and imperfections, hence it will follow, that it is impoſſible the forementioned Doctrines can be true concerning God, who cannot lye, *cannot* deny himſelf: viz. *He being Abſolute and Infinite Perfection, cannot act any thing that is Evil or imperfect; But all the expreſſions in Scripture, that at firſt ſight look towards ſuch a ſenſe, muſt be interpreted by the general* Analogy *and courſe of them, which declares his Infinite, Immu-*

table Excellencies; and these Notions of himself, which he hath written on the Souls of Men.

So that the Subject of this little Discourse, is of vast Moment, and the truth asserted in it, is, I think confirmed with an irresistable Strength and force of Reasoning; and not to be convinced by it, will argue either great weakness of Understanding, in not perceiving consequences that are so close and plain, or great obstinacy of Will, in being shut up by prejudices, and preconceiv'd Opinions against Light that is so clear and manifest.

The Author was a Person with whom I had the Honour and Happiness of a very particular acquaintance; a man he was of a clear Mind, a deep Judgment

and

and ſearching Wit: greatly learned in all the beſt ſorts of Knowledge, old and new, a thoughtful and diligent Enquirer, of a free Underſtanding, and vaſt Capacity, join'd with ſingular Modeſty, and unuſual Sweetneſs of Temper, which made him the Darling of all that knew him: He was a Perſon of great Piety and Generoſity; a hearty Lover of God and Men: An excellent Preacher, a wiſe Governour, a profound Philoſopher, a quick, forcible, and cloſe Reaſoner, and above all, a true and exemplary Chriſtian. In ſhort, he was one who had all the Qualifications of a Primitive *Biſhop, and of an extraordinary Man. This I ſay not out of kindneſs to my Friend, but out of Juſtice*

to a Perſon of whom no Commendation can be extravagant. He was bred in Cambridge, *and Fellow of* Chriſt's *Colledge, where he lived in great Eſteem and Reputation for his eminent Learning and Vertues; he was one of the firſt that overcame the prejudices of the Education of the late unhappy Times, in that Univerſity, and was very Inſtrumental to enlarge others. He had too great a Soul for the trifles of that Age, and ſaw early the nakedneſs of Phraſes and Phancyes; He out-grew the pretended Orthodoxy of thoſe days, and addicted himſelf to the Primitive Learning and Theology, in which he even then became a great Maſter.*

After the return of the Govern-

ment

ment, the exceellent Biſhop Taylor, *foreſeeing the vacancy in the Deanery of* Connor, *ſent to* Cambridge *for ſome Learned and Ingenious Man, who might be fit for that Dignity: The motion was made to Dr.* Ruſt, *which correſponding with the great Inclination he had to be converſant with that incomparable Perſon: He gladly accepted of it, and haſtn'd into* Ireland, *where he landed at* Dublin *about* Auguſt 1661. *He was received with much Reſpect and Kindneſs by that great and good Biſhop, who knew how to value ſuch Jewels; and preferr'd to the Deanery as ſoon as it was void, which was ſhortly after. He continued in that Preferment during the Biſhops Life, always dearly lov'd,*

and

and even admir'd by him.

At his Death (that ſad ſtroke to all the Lovers of Religion and Learning) he was choſen for the laſt ſolemn Office to his deceaſed Father and Friend; and he preach't ſuch a Funeral Sermon as became that extraordinary Perſon and himſelf. It hath been ſince publiſhed, and I ſuppoſe you may have ſeen it, upon the lamented Death of Biſhop Taylor, *which hapned* Auguſt 13th 1677. *The Biſhopricks were divided: Dr.* Boyle *Dean of* Cork, *was nominated Biſhop of* Downe *and* Connor; *and Dr.* Ruſt *Dean of* Connor *Biſhop of* Dromore; *he lived in the Deanery about ſix years, in the Biſhoprick but three; for in* December 1670 *he dyed of a Fever (in the prime*

prime of his years) to the unſpeakable grief of all that knew his Worth, and eſpecially of ſuch of them as had been bleſt by his Friendſhip, and moſt ſweet and indearing Converſation: He was buried in the Quire of his own Cathedral Church of Dromore, *in a Vault made for his Predeceſſour Biſhop* Taylor, *whoſe ſacred Duſt is depoſited alſo there: and what Dormitory hath two ſuch Tenants?*

This is the beſt account I can give you of the Work and the Author: and by it you may perceive his Memory deſerves to live, and this Product of him: but there is ſo much reverence due to the Manes *of ſo venerable a Perſon, that nothing ſhould be haſtily publiſhed under his honour'd name: I know,*

had

had he designed this Exercitation for the Publick, he would have made it much more compleat and exact than we now have it: But as it is, the Discourse is weighty, and substantial, and may be of great use. As it goes about now in written Copies it is, (I perceive) exceedingly depraved, and in danger of being still worse abused; the Publication would preserve it from further corruptions. However I dare not advise any thing in it, but this, that you take the judgment of that Reverend Doctor you mention (the deceased Authors Friend and mine,) and act according as he shall direct. I am,

Your real Friend

Jos. Glanvil.

A DISCOURSE OF TRUTH.

TRUTH is of æquivocal ſignification, and therefore cannot be defined before it be diſtinguiſh't. It is two fold; Truth in *things*, which you may call Truth in the Object: and Truth in the *Underſtanding*, which is Truth in the Subject. By the firſt I mean nothing elſe but that Things neceſſarily are what they are: By the ſecond that there are mutual reſpects and relations of Things one unto another.

other. Now that Things are what they are, and that there are mutual Reſpects and Relations Eternal, and Immutable, and in order of Nature antecedent to any Underſtanding either created or uncreated, is a thing very plain and evident; for it's clearer than the *Meridian* Light, that ſuch Propoſitions as theſe, *Homo eſt animal rationale*, *Triangulum eſt quod habet tres angulos*, are not arbitrarious dependancies upon the Will, Decree, or Underſtanding of God, but are Neceſſary and Eternal Truths; and wherein 'tis as impoſſible to divide the Subject, and what is ſpoken of it, as it is for a thing not to be what it is, which is no leſs than a Contradiction; and as indiſpenſible are the mutual reſpects and relations of things both in Speculatives and Morals.

For can it be imagin'd that every Argument can be made a proportioned *Medium* to prove every Concluſion, that Any thing may be a ſuitable means to Any end? that any

object

object may be conformable to any Faculty? Can Omnipotence it ſelf make theſe Propoſitions that twice two are four, or that Parallels cannot interſect, clear and convincing Arguments to prove theſe grand Truths, *That Chriſt came into the World to dye for Sinners, and is now exalted as a Prince and a Saviour at the Right Hand of God?* Is it poſſible that there ſhould be ſuch a kind of *Geometry*, wherein any problems ſhould be demonſtrated by any Principles; *quidlibet ex quodlibet*; as that a *Quadrangle* is that which is comprehended of four right Lines: Therefore the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones?

Can the infinite Wiſdom it ſelf make the damning of all the Innocent & the unſpotted Angels in Heaven a proportionate means to declare and manifeſt the unmeaſureableneſs of his Grace and Love, and goodneſs towards them? Can Lying, Swearing, Envy, Malice, nay hatred of God

and

and goodneſs it ſelf, be made the moſt acceptable Service of God, and the readieſt way to a mans Happineſs? And yet all theſe muſt be true, and infinitely more ſuch contradictions than we can poſſibly imagine, if the mutual reſpects and relations of things be not Eternal and Indiſpenſible: which that they are, I ſhall endeavour to prove; and in order to it

Firſt, we muſt premiſe that Divine *Underſtanding* cannot be the Fountain of the Truth of things; nor the Foundation of the references of one to another. For it is againſt the Nature of all Underſtanding, to *make* its Objects; it is the nature of Underſtanding, *ut moveatur, illuminetur, formetur: &c.* Of its Object, *ut moveat, illuminet, formet: Intellectus in actu primo* hath its ſelf unto its object, as the Eye unto the Sun; it is irradiated, inlightned and actuated by it: And *Intellectus in actu ſecundo*, hath its ſelf unto its objects, as the Image to that it repreſents; and the perfe-

ction

ction of Underſtanding conſiſts in being actuated by, and in an adæquate Conformity to its object, according to the nature of all Idea's, Images or Repreſentations of things. The Sum is this, No Idea's or Repreſentations are the things they repreſent; all Underſtanding is ſuch; therefore no Underſtanding doth *make* the Natures, Reſpects and Relations of its Objects.

It remains then, that abſolute, arbitrarious and independent *Will* muſt be the Fountain of all Truth; and muſt determine the References and Dependencies of things: which aſſertion would in the *Firſt* place deſtroy the Nature of God, and rob him of all his Attributes. For then it's impoſſible that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as Divine *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge*, which is nothing elſe but an apprehenſion of common notions, and the natures and mutual reſpects and relations of things. For if the Nature of God be ſuch, that his arbitra-

arbitrarious imagination that ſuch and ſuch things have ſuch and ſuch natures and Dependencies, doth make thoſe things to have thoſe Natures or Dependencies, he may as eaſily Unimagine that Imagination; and then they that before had a mutual Harmony, Sympathy and Agreement with one another, ſhall now ſtand at as great a diſtance and oppoſition. And thus the Divine Underſtanding will be a mere Protæan *Chymæra*, a Caſual Conflux of intellectual Atomes: Contradictions are true, if God underſtands them ſo, and then the foundation of all Knowledge is taken away, and God may as truly be ſaid to know nothing as every thing; nay, any Angel or Man may as truly be ſaid to know all things, as God himſelf; for then every thing will be alike certain, and every apprehenſion equally conformable to Truth. Theſe are infallible conſequences, and a thouſand more as abſurd as theſe, if contradictory Propoſitions

ſitions may be both true: and whether they be ſo or no, it's a meer caſual Dependance upon the Arbitrarious pleaſure of God, if there be not a neceſſary immutability and eternal oppoſition betwixt the being and the not being of the ſame thing, at the ſame time and in the ſame reſpect. Likewiſe all thoſe Truths we call *Common Notions*, (the Syſteme and Comprehenſions of which, is the very Eſſence of Divine Wiſdom; as the concluſions iſſuing from them, not by any operoſe deduction, but a clear intuitive light, are the very Nature of Divine Knowledge, if we diſtinguiſh thoſe two Attributes in God) I ſay, all theſe propoſitions of immediate and indemonſtrable Truth, if theſe be only ſo, becauſe ſo underſtood by God, and ſo underſtood by God becauſe he pleaſed ſo to have them, and not becauſe there is an indiſpenſible relation of Harmony and Proportion betwixt the Terms themſelves; then it is a thing

thing meerly caſual, and at the pleaſure of God to change his former apprehenſions, and Idea's of thoſe Truths, & to make their contradictories as Evident, Radical and Fundamental as themſelves but even now were; and ſo Divine Wiſdom and Knowledge will be a various, fickle and mutable thing, a meer tumult & confuſion: all theſe conſequences infallibly flow from this certain Principle, that upon a changeable and uncertain Cauſe, Effects muſt needs have a changeable and uncertain Dependance. And there is nothing imaginable in it ſelf more changeable and uncertain than *Will* not regulated by the dictates of Reaſon and Underſtanding.

If any deny theſe Conſequences and Deductions, becauſe they ſuppoſe that God is mutable and changeable; I anſwer, by bringing this as another abſurdity, that if there be no indiſpenſable and eternal reſpects of things, it will rob God of his Immu-

Immutability, and unchangeableneſs: for if there be no neceſſary dependence betwixt *Unchangeableneſs* and *Perfection*, what ſhould hinder, but that if God pleaſe to *think it ſo*, it will be his perfection to be changeable; and if *Will*, as *ſuch*, be the only principle of his Actions, it is infallibly his Perfection to be ſo. For 'tis the perfection of every Being to act according to the principle of its Nature, and it is the nature of an arbitrarious Principle to act or not, to do or undo upon no account but its own will and pleaſure; to be determined, and tied up, either by it ſelf, or from abroad, is violent and contranatural.

And therefore from this Principle, that abſolute and ſoveraign Will is the Spring and Fountain of all Gods Actions, It was rightly inferr'd by a late *Pamphliteer*, that God will one day damn all Mankind, Good and Bad, Believers and Unbelievers, notwithſtanding all his Promiſes, Pretenſions

tenſions or Engagements to the contrary; becauſe this damning all mankind in deſpight of his Faithfulneſs, Juſtice, Mercy and Goodneſs will be the greateſt advancement of his *Soveraignty*, *Will* and *Prerogative* imaginable. His words are, *God hath ſtored up Deſtruction both for the Perfect and the Wicked, and this does wonderfully ſet forth his Soveraignty; his exerciſing whereof is ſo perfect, that when he hath tied himſelf up faſt as may be, by never ſo many promiſes, yet it ſhould ſtill have its ſcope, and be able to do what it will, when it will, as it will:* here you have this principle improved to the height. And however you may look upon this Author as ſome new Light, or *Ignis fatuus* of the times, yet I aſſure you in ſome pieces by him ſet forth, he is very ſober and rational.

In the next place, to deny the mutual reſpects and *rationes rerum* to be immutable and indiſpenſible, will

will ſpoil God of that *univerſal rectitude* which is the greateſt Perfection of his Nature: for then Juſtice, Faithfulneſs, Mercy, Godneſs *&c.* will be but contingent and arbitrarious Iſſues of the Divine Will. This is a clear and undeniable Conſequence, for if you ſay theſe be indiſpenſible perfections in God, for inſtance, if *Juſtice* be ſo, then there is an eternal relation of Right and Equity betwixt every Being and the giving of it, that which is its propriety; if *Faithfulneſs*, then there is an indiſpenſible agreement betwixt a promiſe, and the performance of it; if *Mercy*, then there is an immutable and unalterable ſuitableneſs and harmony between an indigent Creature, and pity and commiſeration; if *Goodneſs*, then there is an everlaſting Proportion and Symmetry between fulneſs and its overflowing and diſpreading of it ſelf, which is the thing denyed: for to ſay they are indiſpenſibly ſo, becauſe God underſtands them ſo,

ſeems to me extream incogitancy; for that is againſt the nature of all underſtanding, which is but the Idea and Repreſentation of things, and is then a true and perfect Image, when it is exactly conformed to its object: and therefore, if things have not mutual reſpects and Relations eternal and indiſpenſible, then all thoſe perfections do ſolely and purely depend upon abſolute and independent Will, as *Will*; And conſequently, it was and is indifferent in it ſelf that the contrary to theſe, as, *Injuſtice*, *Unfaithfulneſs*, *Cruelty*, *Malice*, *Hatred*, *Spite*, *Revenge*, *Fury*; and whatever goes to the conſtitution of Hell it ſelf ſhould have been made the top and higheſt perfections of the divine Nature: which is ſuch Blaſphemy as cannot well be named without horror and trembling, for inſtead of being a God, ſuch a nature as this is, joyned with omnipotency would be a worſe Devil than any is in Hell. And yet this is a neceſſary and

and infallible conſequence from the denial of theſe mutual reſpects and relations of things unto one another, to be eternal and unchangeable. And as by the denial of theſe, the Nature of God is wholly deſtroyed, ſo in the ſecond place, the *mind of Man* would have no certainty of Knowledge, or aſſurance of Happineſs. He can never come to Know there is a God, and conſequently not the Will and Mind of God, which if there be no intrinſecal and indiſpenſible reſpects and relations of things, muſt be the ground and foundation of all Knowledge: for what means or arguments ſhould we uſe to find out, or prove a Divine Nature? It were folly and madneſs to ſit down and conſider the admirable contrivement and artifice of this great Fabrick of the Univerſe; how that all natural things ſeem to act for ſome end, though themſelves take no Cognizance of it: How the Sun by its motion and ſituation, or (which is all one) by being a Cen-

tre, of the Earths Motion, provides Light and Heat, and Life for this inferiour World, how living Creatures bring forth a moſt apt compoſure and ſtructure of parts and members, and with that a being endued with admirable Faculties, and yet themſelves have no inſight into, nor conſultation about this incomparable Workmanſhip; how they are furniſhed with Powers and Inclinations for the preſervation of this Body when it is once brought into the World; how without prævious deliberation they naturally take in that Food which without their intention or animadverſion is concocted in their Ventricle, turned into Chyle, that Chyle into Blood, that Blood diffuſed through the Veins and Arteries, and therewith the ſeveral Members nouriſhed, and decayes of ſtrength repaired; I ſay, the gathering from all theſe (which one would think were a very natural Conſequence) that there is a wiſe Principle which directs all theſe Beings

ings unknown to you, in their ſeveral motions, to their ſeveral ends, (ſuppoſing the dependance and relations of things to be contingent and arbitrarious) were a piece of folly and incogitancy; for how can the Order of thoſe things ſpeak a wiſe and underſtanding Being, which have no relation or reſpect unto one another, but their whole agreement, ſuitableneſs and proportion is a meer caſual Iſſue of abſolute and independent Will? If any thing may be the cauſe of any effect, and a proportionate mean to any end, who can infer infinite Wiſdom from the dependence of things and their relations unto one another? for we are to know that there is a God, and the Will of that God before we can know the mutual Harmony, or Diſproportion of things; and yet, if we do not know theſe principal reſpects that things have among themſelves, it is impoſſible we ſhould ever come to the knowledge of a God: for theſe are the only arguments that any Logick in the World can make

uſe of to prove any concluſion: But ſuppoſe we ſhould come to know that there is a God, which, as I have demonſtrated, denying the neceſſary and immutable truth of common Notions, and the indiſpenſible and eternal relations of things is altogether impoſſible. However, let it be ſuppoſed; yet how ſhall we know that theſe common Notions, and principles of natural inſtinct, which are the foundation of all Diſcourſe and Argumentation, are certain and infallible Truths; and that our *Senſes*, (which with theſe former Principles, we ſuppoſe this Divine Nature to have given us to converſe with this outward world) were not on purpoſe beſtowed upon us, to befool, delude and cheat us; if we be not firſt aſſured of the *Veracity* of God? and how can we be aſſured of that, if we know not that Veracity is a perfection; and how ſhall we know it is ſo, unleſs there be an intrinſecal relation betwixt Veracity and per-

perfection? for if it be an arbitrarious reſpect depending upon the Will of God, there is no way poſſible left whereby we ſhould come to know that it is in God at all; And therefore we have fully as much reaſon to believe that all our common Notions and Principles of natural inſtinct, whereupon we ground all our reaſonings and diſcourſe, are meer Chymera's to delude and abuſe our faculties; and all thoſe Idea's Phantaſms and Apprehenſions of our external ſenſes, we imagine are occaſioned in us by the preſence of outward objects, are meer Spectrums and Gulleries, wherewith poor mortals are befooled and cheated; as that they are given us by the firſt Goodneſs & Truth to lead us into the Knowledge of himſelf and Nature.

This is a clear and evident conſequence, and cannot be denyed by any that doth not complain of darkneſs in the brighteſt and moſt Meridian Light. And here you have the foundations laid of the higheſt Scepti-

ciſm; for who can ſay he knows any thing, when he hath no baſiſon which he can raiſe any true concluſions?

Thus you ſee the noble faculties of man, his Mind and Underſtanding, will be to no end and purpoſe, but for a Rack and Torture; for what greater unhappineſs or torment can there be imagined, than to have Faculties, whoſe Accompliſhment and Perfection conſiſts in a due conformation unto their objects, and yet to have no objects unto which they may be conformed; To have a Soul unmeaſurably breathing after the embraces of Truth and Goodneſs, and after a ſearch and enquiry after one and the other, and to find at laſt they are but aiery empty and uncertain Notions, depending upon the arbitrarious determinations of boundleſs and independent Will; which determinations ſhe ſees it beyond her reach ever to come to any knowledge of?

Here you have likewiſe the true Foundations of that we call *Rantiſm*,

tiſm: for if there be no diſtinction 'twixt Truth and Falſhood, Good and Evil, in the nature of the things themſelves, and we never can be aſſured what is the mind and pleaſure of the ſupream and abſolute Will (becauſe Veracity is not intrinſecally and *ex natura rei*, a Perfection, but only an Arbitrarious, if *any* Attribute in the Deity) then it infallibly follows, that it is all one what I do, or how I live; and I have as much reaſon to believe that I am as pleaſing unto God, when I give up my ſelf unto all Filthineſs, Uncleanneſs and Sin; when I ſwell with Pride, Envy, Hatred and Malice &c. as when I endeavour with all my Might and Strength to purge and purifie my Soul from all pollution and defilement both of Fleſh and Spirit; and when I purſue the mortification of all my carnal Luſts and Inclinations: And I have fully as much ground and aſſurance, that the one is the ready Way to Happineſs as the other.

And this is another branch of this *ſecond* Abſurdity, from the denial of the intrinſecal and eternal reſpects and relations of things, that a man would not have any aſſurance of future Happineſs; for though it be true indeed, or at leaſt we fancy to our ſelves that God hath ſent *Jeſus Chriſt* into the world, & by him hath made very large and ample promiſes, that whoſoever believes in him and conforms his life unto his Precepts, ſhall be made heir of the ſame Inheritance and Glory which Chriſt is now poſſeſſed of and inveſted with in the Kingdom of his Father, yet what ground have we to believe that God does not intend onely to play with and abuſe our Faculties, and in concluſion to damn all thoſe that believe and live as is above expreſſed; and to take *them only* into the Injoyments of Heaven and Happineſs, who have been the great Oppoſers of the Truth, and Goſpel, and Life and Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt* in the world: for if there be no eternal and

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indispensible Relation of Things, then there's no intrinsecal Evil in Deceiving and Falsifying, in the damning the Good, or saving obstinate and contumacious Sinners (whilst such) notwithstanding any promises or threatnings to the contrary; and if the things be in themselves indifferent, it is an unadvised Confidence to pronounce determinately on either side. Yea further, suppose we should be assured that God is *Verax*, and that the Scripture doth declare what is his Mind and Pleasure, yet if there be not an intrinsecal opposition betwixt the Being, and not Being of a thing at the same time, and in the same respect; then God can make a thing that hath been *done*, *undone*; and that whatever hath been done or spoken either by himself, or Christ, or his Prophets, or Apostles, should never be done, or spoken by him or them; though He hath come into the world, yet that He should not be come; though he hath made these promises, yet that they should not be

made

made; though God hath given us Faculties, that are capable of the enjoyment of himself, yet that he should not have given them us; and yet we should have no Being, nor think a thought while we fancy and speak of all these contradictions; In fine, it were impossible we should know any thing, if the opposition of contradictory terms depend upon the arbitrarious resolves of any Being whatsoever. If any should affirm, that the terms of Common Notions have an eternal and indispensible relation unto one another, and deny it of other truths, he exceedingly betrayes his folly and incogitancy; for these common Notions and principles are foundations, and radical truths upon which are built all the deductions of reason and Discourse, and with which, so far as they have any truth in them, they are inseparably united. All these consequences are plain and undeniable, and therefore I shall travel no further in the confirmation of them.

Against this Discourse will be *objected*,

ed, that it deſtroys God's *Independency* and *Self-ſufficiency*; for if there be truth antecedently to the Divine Underſtanding; the Divine Underſtanding will be a meer paſſive principle, acted and inlightned by ſomething without it ſelf, as the Eyes, by the Sun, and leſſer objects, which the Sun irradiates: And if there be mutual congruities, and dependencies of things in a moral ſenſe, and ſo, that ſuch and ſuch means have a natural, and intrinſecal tendency, or repugnance to ſuch and ſuch ends, then will God be determined in his actions from ſomething without himſelf, which is to take away his independency, and Self-ſufficiency. The pardoning of Sin to repenting Sinners ſeems to be a thing very ſuitable to infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, if there be any ſuitableneſs, or agreement in things antecedently to Gods Will; therefore in this caſe will God be moved from abroad, and as it were Determined to an act of Grace. This will alſo undermine and ſhake many principles and opinions

which

which are look'd upon as Fundamentals, and necessary to be believed: It will unlink and break that chain and method of Gods Decrees, which is generally believed amongst us. God's great plot, and design from all eternity, as it is usually held forth, was to advance his Mercy and Justice in the Salvation of some, and Damnation of others; We shall only speak of that part of Gods design, the advancement of his Justice in the Damnation of the greatest part of mankind, as being most pertinent for the improving of the strength of the objection against our former Discourse: That I may do this, He decrees to create man, and being created, decrees that man should sin, and because, as some say, man is a meer passive principle, not able, no not in the presence of objects, to reduce himself into actions; Or because in the moment of his creation, as others, he was impowered with an indifferency to stand or fall; Therefore, lest there should be a frustration of God's great design; he decrees in the

next

next place, infallibly to determine the Will of man unto Sin, that having ſinned he might accompliſh his Damnation; and what he had firſt, & from all eternity in his intentions, the advancement of his Juſtice. Now if there be ſuch an intrinſecal relation of things, as our former Diſcourſe pretends unto, this deſign of God will be wholly fruſtrated. For it may ſeem clear to every mans underſtanding that it is not for the Honour and Advancement of Juſtice to determine the will of man to ſin, and then to puniſh him for that Sin unto which he was ſo determined; Whereas if God's Will, as ſuch, be the only Rule & principle of actions, this will be an accommodate means (if God ſo pleaſe to have it) unto his deſign. The Sum is, We have ſeemed in our former diſcourſe to bind and tye up God, who is an abſolute and independent Being, to the petty formalities of Good and Evil; & to fetter and impriſon freedom, and liberty it ſelf, in the fatal and immutable chains, and reſpects of things.

I anſwer. This objection concerns partly the underſtanding of God, and partly his Will; As for the divine underſtanding, the Caſe is thus; There are certain Beings, or natures of things which are Logically poſſible; it implyes no contradiction that they ſhould be, although it were ſuppoſed, there were no power that could bring them into being; which natures, or things, ſuppoſing they were in being, would have mutual relations of agreement or oppoſition unto one another, which would be no more diſtinguiſhed from the things themſelves, than Relations are from that which founds them. Now the Divine Underſtanding is a repreſentation, or Comprehenſion of all thoſe natures or beings thus *logically*, and in reſpect of God abſolutely poſſible, and conſequently it muſt needs be alſo a comprehenſion of all theſe Sympathies, and Antipathies, either in a natural or a moral Way, which they have one unto another: for they, as I ſaid, do neceſſarily, and immediate-

ly flow from the things themſelves, as relations do, *poſito fundamento & termino.* Now the Divine underſtanding doth not at all depend upon theſe natures, or relations though they be its objects; for the nature of an object doth not conſiſt in being *motivum facultatis*, as it is uſually with us, whoſe apprehenſions are awakened by their preſence; but its whole nature is ſufficiently comprehended in this, that it is *terminativum Facultatis*; and this preciſely doth not ſpeak any dependency of the faculty upon it, eſpecially in the divine underſtanding; where this *objective, terminative* preſence flows from the fæcundity of the Divine nature: for the things themſelves are ſo far from having any being antecedently to the Divine underſtanding; that had not it been their exemplary pattern, and *Idea*, they had never been created, and being created they would lye in darkneſs; (I ſpeak of things that have not in them a principle of underſtanding, not conſcious of their own

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natures,

natures, and that beauteous harmony they have among themſelves) were they not irradiated by the Divine underſtanding, which is as it were an univerſal Sun that diſcovers and diſplayes the natures and reſpects of things, and does as it were ſuck them up into its beames.

To the ſecond part of the *Objection*, the ſtrength whereof is, that to tye up God in his actions to the reaſon of things, deſtroys his Liberty, Abſoluteneſs, and Independency. I anſwer, it is no imperfection for God to be determined to Good; It is no bondage, ſlavery, or contraction, to be bound up to the eternal Laws of Right and Juſtice: it is the greateſt impotency and weakneſs in the world to have a power to evil, and there is nothing ſo diametrically oppoſite to the very being and nature of God; *Stat pro ratione voluntas*, unleſs it be as a redargution and check to impudent and daring inquirers, is an account no where juſtifiable. The more any Being partakes of reaſon and underſtanding,

ſtanding, the worſe is the imputation of acting arbitrariouſly, *& pro imperio.* We can pardon it in Women and children, as thoſe from whom we do not expect that they ſhould act upon any higher principle, but for a man of reaſon and underſtanding, that hath the Laws of goodneſs and rectitude (which are as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians* that cannot be altered) engraven upon his mind, for Him to caſt off theſe golden reins, and to ſet up arbitrarious Will for his Rule and Guide, is a piece of intolerable raſhneſs and preſumption. This is an infallible rule, that liberty in the power or principle is no where a perfection, where there is not an indifferency in the things or actions about which it is converſant: And therefore it is a piece of our weakneſs and imbecillity, that we have natures ſo indetermined to what is good. Theſe things need no proof, indeed cannot well be proved, otherwiſe than they prove themſelves: for they are of immediate truth, and prove them-

themſelves, they will, to a pure unprejudiced mind.

2. Our former Diſcourſe doth not infer any dependency of God, upon any thing without himſelf; for God is not excited to his actions by any foreign, or extrinſecal motives; what He does, proceeds from the eternal immutable reſpects, and relations, or reaſons of things, and where are theſe to be found, but in the Eternal and divine Wiſdom; for what can infinite Wiſdom be, but a ſteady, and immoveable comprehenſion of all thoſe natures and relations: and therefore God in his actions, does not look abroad, but only conſults, (if I may ſo ſpeak) the *Idea's* of his own mind. What Creatures doe, is but the offering a particular caſe, for the reducement of a general principle into a particular action; or the preſentment of an occaſion for God to act according to the principles of his own nature; when we ſay that God pardoneth Sin upon repentance, God is not moved to an act of grace from

from any thing without himſelf; for this is a principle in the Divine Wiſdom, that pardon of Sin to repenting ſinners, is a thing very ſuitable to infinite goodneſs, and this principle is a piece of the Divine nature: therefore when God upon a particular act of repentance puts forth a particular act of grace, It is but as it were a particular inſtance to the general rule, which is a portion of Divine perfection, when 'tis ſaid, *to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance*, the meaning is, He that walks up unto that light, and improves that ſtrength, that God hath already communicated unto him, ſhall have more abundant incomes of light and ſtrength from God: It doth not follow that God is moved from without to impart his Grace. For this is a branch of Divine Wiſdom; it is agreeable to the infinite goodneſs of God, to take notice of, and reward the ſincere, though weak endeavours of his Creatures, after him; ſo that what is from abroad is but a parti-

particular occaſion to thoſe divine principles to exert, and put forth themſelves.

Thus have we ſpoken concerning the *truth* of *things*. It follows that we ſpeak

Concerning *Truth* in the *power*, or faculty, which we ſhall diſpatch in a few words.

Truth in the power, or faculty is nothing elſe but a conformity of its conceptions or *Idea*'s unto the natures and relations of things, which in God we may call an actual, ſteady, immoveable, eternal Omniformity, as *Plotinus* calls the Divine Intellect, ὁ πάντα, which you have largely deſcribed by him. And this the *Platoniſts* truly call the intellectual world, for here are the natures of all things pure, and unmix'd, purged from all thoſe dregs, refined from all that Droſs and alloy which cleave unto them in their particular inſtances. All inferiour and ſublunary things, not excluding man himſelf, have their excreſcencies, and Defects, Exorbitances,

bitances, or privations are moulded up in their very frames and conſtitutions. There is ſomewhat extraneous heterogeneous and preternatural in all things here below, as they exiſt amongſt us; but in that other world, like the moſt purely fined gold, they ſhine in their native and proper glory. Here is the firſt goodneſs, the benigne Parent of the whole creation, with his numerous off-ſpring: the infinite throng of created Beings: Here is the fountain of eternal Love, with all its ſtreams, and Rivulets: Here is the Sum of uncreated glory, ſurrounded with all his rayes, and beams: Here are the eternal, and indiſpenſible Laws of right and Juſtice, the immediate and indemonſtrable principles of truth, and goodneſs: Here are ſteady and immoveable rules, for all caſes and actions, however circumſtantiated, from which the Will of God, though never ſo abſolute, and independent from everlaſting to everlaſting, ſhall never depart one Tittle. Now all that truth that is in any created

created Being, is by participation and derivation from this firſt underſtanding, and fountain of intellectual light. And that truth in the power or faculty is nothing but the conformity of its conceptions, or *Ideas* with the natures and relations of things, is cleare and evident in it ſelf, and neceſſarily follows from what hath been formerly proved concerning the truth of things themſelves, antecedently to any underſtanding, or will; for things are what they are, and cannot be otherwiſe without a contradiction, and their mutual reſpects and dependencies eternal and unchangeable, as hath been already ſhew'd: ſo that the conceptions and *Ideas* of theſe natures and their relations, can be only ſo far true as they conform and agree with the things themſelves, and the harmony which they have one to another.

FINIS.

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FINIS.

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS And SALVATION

Rescued from

Vulgar Errours.

BY

JOSEPH GLANVIL

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed for *James Collins*, in the *Temple*-passage from *Essex*-*Street*, 1677.

Imprimatur,

Sam. Parker.

April 9th 1670.

To the Right Honourable

Charles Lord *Herbert*,

Eldeſt Son to the moſt Honorable

HENRY

Lord Marquis of

WORCESTER.

My Lord,

ALthough I have not had the Happineſs to ſee your Lordſhip ſince your very tender years, by reaſon of your diſtance in Foreign parts; yet I have heard ſo much of your great Improvements in Knowledge

and Vertue, that I cannot ſlip this occaſion to congratulate your early Fame, and the hopes, or rather Aſſurance you give of being an extraordinary Perſon. For that ſeaſon of Life which ſo many others paſs away in Frolicks, and Riot, and vain Amours; In Raillery, and the wanton Eſſays of Buffooning & Verſifying Wit, (which contemptible childiſhneſs the youth of the preſent age ſeems to value as the higheſt Perfection) your Lordſhip wiſely, and worthily imploys in gaining thoſe

thoſe real Acompliſhments, which may fit you for Publick Service, in that high Station in which Providence hath ſet you.

My Lord, you are deſcended from an Ancient Stock of moſt Noble Progenitors, and are the immediate Son of a Lord and Lady, whoſe Vertues may inſpire all who have the Honour and Happineſs to be related to them, with the Nobleſt Thoughts and Endeavours; and doubtleſs a generous Ambition prompts your Lordſhip to

appear worthy the Glories of ſuch Anceſtors. Nobility is the mark of the favour of Princes, and when 'tis adorn'd with intellectual and moral Excellencies, it hath then the Signatures of God upon it, and the *Perſonal* gives Luſtre to the *Hereditary* Greatneſs. Secular Honours extort outward ſhews of Reſpect and Homage; while the unſuitable Diſpoſitions of ſuch as are painted with miſplaced Titles, make them Objects of the real ſcorn of their pretended Adorers; But the Nobleneſs

ne's of a wise and Vertuous Spirit commands inward Venerations, and hath a large Empire over the Souls of Men. Knowledge is a Beam of the Cœlestial Light, and Vertue a Branch of the Divine Image; Great Excellencies in themselves, and true Accomplishments of humane Nature: In both your Lordship hath outdone your few years, and given a Pattern to young Noblemen, how to imploy their Youth Honourably and Becommingly, to the Reputation of their Quality, and

Families; and their own Happineſs and Glory.

But, my Lord, there is a Perfection beyond theſe, or more properly, 'tis the height and perfection of them, and that is Religion: this makes Honourable in both Worlds; and enters thoſe that are truly poſſeſt of it, among the Nobility of God. I doubt not but your Lordſhip hath taken care to ſeaſon your Active and Conſiderate Youth with the Study and Practice of this beſt Accompliſhment: ſuch a Dedication of the

firſt

firſt Fruits to our Maker is moſt juſt in it ſelf, moſt acceptable to Him, and will be moſt comfortable to the Perſon that makes the Offering. Your Lordſhip is by the Bounty of Providence incircled with all Circumſtances of Earthly Felicity; Piety and a Religious Life will procure the Divine favour, bleſs all your Injoyments in this World, and aſſure infinitely better in another. *There* dwells our Happineſs, and Religion is the way to it. This is the Subject of the little

Book

Book with which I here humbly present your Lordship. If it may contribute any thing to your Service, in these highest Concerns, it will be a mighty Pleasure, and Satisfaction to,

My Lord,

Your Lordships

Most humble and most obedient Servant,

Jos. Glanvil.

The

The Preface.

THis Diſcourſe was firſt printed about ſix years ago; ſince which time it had the fortune of a ſtoln Edition in Scotland. The occaſion of its Publication was this, I being deſired to preach at a neighbour-City, recollected the laſt Sermon I had delivered to mine own people, and made uſe of that: ſome of the Hearers, that thought themſelves fit Judges, miſapprehended my meaning in divers things, and paſt Sentence upon their own miſtakes as mine: this induced me to tranſcribe it out of my memory; which I did while it was yet freſh in my mind, exactly as to the matter, though poſſibly with ſome ſmall difference as to the frame of words, and with ſome additions at the end: The Copy was accidentally ſeen by a near Relation, who deſired it ſhould be publiſh'd, which I permitted; and do it now again at my Bookſeller's Inſtance.

Luke

Luke 12. 24.

Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate: For many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

THE

The Way OF HAPPINESS AND SALVATION.

WHEN I consider the *goodness* of God; and the *merits* of his Son, our Saviour; and the *Influences* of the Holy Spirit; and all the *advantages* of the Gospel; The *certainty* of its Principles, the *reasonableness* of its duties, the *greatness* of its ends, the *suitableness* of its means, the *glory* of its Rewards,

and the *Terrour of its punishments*; I say, when I consider *those*, and then look upon *Man* as a *reasonable* Creature, apprehensive of *Duty*, and *interest*, and apt to be moved by *hopes* and *fears*; I cannot but wonder, and be astonisht to think, that notwithstanding *all this*, the far greater part of men should finally miscarry, and be undone. 'Tis possible *some* such *Considerations* might be the occasion of the *Question* propounded to our Saviour in the verse immediately foregoing the Text. ---*Lord, are there Few that be saved? God* is *Love*, and all the Creatures are *His*, and man a noble sort: *He* is the *Lover* of *Men*, and *Thou* art *Redeemer* of Men; and though *Man* hath *offended*, yet God is propense to *pardon*, and in *Thee* he is reconciled; He is desirous of our happiness, and Thou art come into the world to offer, and promote it; and the *Holy Ghost* is *powerful* and *ready* to assist our endeavours; We were made for happiness, and we seek it; And --- *Lord*,

Lord, are there Few that be ſaved? The Text is Chriſt's return to the Queſtion, *Strive to enter in at the ſtraight Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.* In which words we have three things.

(I) An Anſwer imply'd; *ſtraight is the Gate.*

(II) A duty expreſt, *ſtrive to enter.*

(III) A Conſideration to engage our greater care and deligence in the Duty; *For many will ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.*

By the *Gate*, we may underſtand the entrance, and all the way of Happineſs, and that is, *Religion*; By the *ſtraightneſs* of it; the *Difficulties* we are to encounter. By *ſtriving*; earneſt and ſincere *endeavour*: By *ſeeking*; an *imperfect ſtriving*. And from the words thus briefly explain'd, Theſe Propoſitions offer themſelves to onr Conſideration.

I. There are many and great difficulties in Religion, *The Gate is ſtraight.*

II. The difficulties may be overcome by ſtriving, *Strive to enter.*

III. There is a ſort of ſtriving that will not procure an entrance, *For many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*

I begin with the Firſt in order, *viz. That there are many and great difficulties in Religion*; And to what I have to ſay about it, I premiſe this negative Conſideration. That,

The *Difficulties* of *Religion* do not lye in the *Underſtanding*. *Religion* is a *plain* thing, and *eaſie* to be *underſtood*. 'Tis no *deep* ſubtilty, or *high-ſtrain'd* notion; 'tis no *gilded* phancy, or *elaborate* exerciſe of the brain; 'Tis not plac'd in the *clouds* of Imagination, nor wrapt up in *myſtical* cloathing; But 'tis *obvious* and *familiar*, *eaſie* and *intelligible*; Firſt preach't by *Fiſhermen* and *Mechanicks*, without pomp of ſpeech, or height of ſpeculation; addreſt

addreſt to *Babes* and *Plebeian* heads; and intended to govern the *wills* of the *honeſt*, and *ſincere*; and not to exerciſe the *wits* of the *notional*, and *curious*. So that we need not mount the *wings* of the *wind* to fetch *Religion* from the *ſtars*; nor go down to the *deep* to fetch it *up* from thence; For 'tis *with us*, and *before us*, as *open* as the *day*, and as *familiar* as the *light*. The *great Precepts* of the Goſpel are cloathed in Sun-beams, and are as viſible to the *common* eye, as to the *Eagle* upon the higheſt perch. 'Tis no piece of *wit* or *ſubtilty* to be a *Chriſtian*, nor will it require much ſtudy, or learned retirement to *underſtand* the Religion we muſt practiſe. That which was to be *known* of *God*, was *manifeſt* to the very Heathen, *Rom.* 1. 19. *The Law is light*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 6. 13. And 'tis not only a ſingle paſſing glance on the eye; but 'tis *put into the heart*, and the promiſe is, that *we ſhall all know him, from the greateſt to the leaſt*. Our duty is ſet up

in open places, and ſhone upon by a clear Beam; 'Twas written of old upon the plain Tables of *Habakkuk*, *Hab.* 2. 2. So that the *running Eye* might *ſee and read:* And the *Religion* of the H. *Jeſus*, like *himſelf*, came into the world with *Rays* about its Head.

Religion, I ſay, is *clear*, and *plain*, and what is not *ſo*, may concern the *Theatre*, or the *Schools*; may entertain mens *Wits*, and ſerve the Intereſts of *Diſputes*; but 'tis nothing to *Religion*, 'tis nothing to the *Intereſt* of mens Souls.

Religion was once a *Myſtery*, but the Myſtery is *revealed*; And thoſe things that we yet count *Myſteries*, are *plainly* enough diſcover'd as to their *being ſuch* as we believe them, though we cannot underſtand the *manner how*; and 'tis no part of *Religion* to *enquire* into that, but rather *It* injoyns us meekly to acquieſce in the plain declarations of Faith without *bold* ſcrutiny into *hidden things*.

In

In short I say, the *difficulties of Religion are not in the Understanding; In promptu & Facili est æternitas*, said the Father; The affairs of eternity depend on things *Easy* and *Familiar*. And I premise this to prevent dangerous mistakes.

But though Religion be so facile and plain a thing to be understood, yet the *way* to *Heaven* is no *broad*, or *easie Path*; The *Gate is straight* enough for all that; and I now come to shew what are the *real difficulties* of *Religion*, and whence they arise.

I. One great Difficulty ariseth from the *depravity* of our *Natures*. The Scripture intimates, *That we are conceived in sin*, Psalm 55. 5. *Transgressours from the Womb*. Isaiah 48. 8. And *Children of Wrath*. Ephes. 2. 3. And we find by *Experience* that we bring *vile* Inclinations into the Wold with us. *Some* are *naturally* Cruel and Injurious; Proud and Imperious; Lustful and Revengful;

Others, Covetous and Unjuſt; Humourſome and Diſcontented; Treacherous and Falſe: And there is ſcarce an inſtance of *habitual* vice, or villany, but ſome or other are addicted to it by their *particular Make and Natures:* I ſay, their *Natures*, for certainly it is not true what ſome affirm, to ſerve their Opinions, in contradiction to Experience; That *Vices are not in Mens natural Propenſions; but inſtill'd by corrupt Education, evil Cuſtoms and Examples:* For we ſee that thoſe whoſe *Education* hath been the *ſame*, do yet *differ* extreamly from each other in their *inclinations*; And *ſome*, whoſe Breeding hath been *careleſs* and *looſe*, who have ſeen almoſt nothing elſe but Examples of *Vice*; and been inſtructed in *little*, beſides the arts of *Vanity* and *Pleaſure*; I ſay, there are *ſuch* who notwithſtanding theſe their *unhappy* circumſtances, diſcover none of thoſe *vile* Inclinations, and Propenſions, that are in *others*, whoſe *Education* hath been

been very *ſtrict* and *advantageous*. This I think is enough to ſhew that many of our evil habits are from *Nature*, and not from *Cuſtom* only.

And yet I cannot ſay that *Humane Nature* is *ſo* debaucht, that *every Man* is inclin'd to *every Evil* by *it*: For there are *thoſe*, who by their *Tempers* are *averſe* to ſome kind of Vices, and *naturally* diſpoſed to the *contrary Vertues*; *ſome* by their *Conſtitutions* are inclined to *hate Cruelty*, *Covetouſneſs*, *Lying*, *Impudence* and *Injuſtice*, and are by *Temper*, *Merciful*, *Liberal*, *Modeſt*, *True* and *Juſt*. There are *kinds* of *Vices* which our Natures almoſt *univerſally* riſe againſt, as many *Beſtialities*, and ſome *horrid Cruelties*; and *all* men, except *Monſters* in Humane form, are diſpoſed to *ſome* Vertues, ſuch as *Love* to *Children*, and *Kindneſs* to *Friends* and *Benefactors*. All this I muſt confeſs and ſay, becauſe *Experience* conſtrains me; and I do not know why *Syſtematick Notions* ſhould

ſway more than *that.*

But notwithſtanding *theſe* laſt conceſſions, 'tis evident enough that our Natures are much *vitiated*, and *depraved*; and *this* makes our buſineſs in the way of Religion, *difficult.* For our work is, to *cleanſe* our *Natures*; and to *deſtroy* thoſe *Evil Inclinations*; to *crucifie the Old Man*; Rom. 6. 6. and to *purge out the old Leven*; 1 Cor. 5. 7. *This* is *Religion*, and the *Way* of Happineſs, which muſt needs be very *difficult*, and *uneaſie.* For the vices of *Inclination* are very *dear*, and *grateful* to us; They are our *Right Hands*, and our *Right Eyes*, and eſteemed as *our Selves:* So that to *cut* off, and *pluck* out *theſe*, and to bid defiance to, and wage War againſt our ſelves; to deſtroy the firſt born of our Natures, and to lop off our own Limbs; This cannot but be very *Irkſom* and *Diſpleaſant* Imployment, and this is one chief buſineſs; and a conſiderable thing that makes *Religion difficult.*

II. Another.

II. Another *Difficulty* ariſeth from the *Influence* of the *Senſes*. We are Creatures of *ſenſe*, and ſenſible things do moſt powerfully move us, we are born *Children*, and live at firſt the *life* of *Beaſts*: That Age receives *deep* Impreſſions; and thoſe are made by the *ſenſes*, whoſe Intereſt grows *ſtrong*, and eſtabliſht in us before we come to the *uſe* of *Reaſon*; and after we have arrived to the exerciſe of *that*, ſenſible objects ſtill *poſſeſs* our *Affections*, and *ſway* our *Wills*, and *fill* our *Imaginations*, and *influence* our *Underſtandings*; ſo that we *love*, and *hate*; we *deſire* and *chooſe*, we *fancy*, and we *diſcourſe* according to thoſe *Impreſſions*; and hence it is that we are *enamour'd* of *Trifles*, and *fly* from our *Happineſs*; and *purſue Vexation*, and *embrace Miſery*; and *imagine Perverſely*, and *reaſon Childiſhly*: for the influence of the Body, and its Senſes are the chief Fountains of *Sin*, and *Folly*, and *Temptation*::

tation: Upon which accounts it was that the *Platonical Philosophers* declaim'd so *earnestly* against the *Body*, and ascrib'd all *Evils* and Michief to it; calling *vice* κακία ἔνυλος, *corporeæ Pestes*, *material Evils*, and *bodily Plagues*. And the Apostle that understood it better, calls *Sin* by the name of *Flesh*, Gal. 5. 17. *Works of the Flesh*, Gal. 5. 19. *Law of the Members*, Rom. 7. 23. and cries out upon the *Body of this Death*, Rom. 7. 24.

And now this is our *natural* Condition, a *state* subject to the *prevalent* influences of *Sense*, and by this means to *Sin* and *Temptation*; and 'tis our *Work* in Religion, to *mortifie* the *Body*, Rom. 8. 13. *and to cease from making provision for the Flesh*, Rom. 13. 14. *and from fulfilling the Lusts thereof*, Gal. 5. 14. To render our selves *dead* to the prevalent life of Sense and Sin, *Rom.* 6. 8. and 11. 5. and to *arise* to a *new Life*, Rom. 6. 4. The *Life* of *Righteousness*, and

Faith,

Faith, Hab. 2 4. A *Life* that hath other *Principles*, and other *Pleaſures*; other *Objects*, and other *Ends*, and *ſuch* as neither *Eye hath ſeen*, nor *Ear heard*, nor any of the Senſes perceived. Yea, *this* is a Life that is exerciſed in *contradiction* to the Judgments of *ſenſe*. Its *Joy*, is *Tribulation*; Jam. 1. 2. Its *Glory*, *Reproaches*; 2 Pet. 4. 14. Its *Height*, is *Lowneſs*; Luke 14. 11. Its *Greatneſs*, in being *Meaneſt*; Matth. 20. 27. And its *Riches*, in having *Nothing*; 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. To ſuch a Life as *this*, Religion is to raiſe us; and it muſt needs be *difficult* to make *us*, who are *ſo* much *Brutes*, to be *ſo* much *Angels*; *us*, who ſeem to live by nothing *elſe* but *ſenſe*, to live by *nothing leſs*; This with a witneſs is an *hard*, and *uneaſie* Work, and another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

III. A *Third* proceeds from the natural *Diſorder* and *Rage* of our *Paſſions*. Our Corrupt Natures are like the

the *troubled Sea*, Isa. 57. 20. And our *Passions* are the *Waves* of that Ocean, that tumble and swell, and keep a mighty noise; they dash against the Rocks, and break one against another; and our Peace and Happiness is shipwrackt by them. *Our Passions make us miserable.* We are sometimes *stifled* by their *Numbers*, and *confounded* by their *Disorders*, and *torn* to pieces by their *Violence*; mounted to the Clouds by *Ambition*, and thrown down to the *deep* by *Despair*; scorcht by the *flames* of *Lust*, and *overwhelmed* by the *Waters* of unstable *Desire*; *Passions* fight *one against another*, and *all* against reason; they prevail over the Mind, and have *usurpt* the Government of our Actions, and involve us in continual Guilt and Misery. This is the *natural* State of Man; and our *work* in the way of *Religion*, is to *restrain* this *Violence*, and to *rectifie* these *Disorders*, and to *reduce* those *Rebellious* Powers under the Empire and Government of the *Mind*,

Mind, their *Soveraign*. And ſo to *regain* the Divine *Image*, which conſiſts much in the *order* of our *Faculties*; and the *Subjection* of the *Brutiſh*, to the *reaſonable* Powers. *This*, I ſay, Religion aims at, to raiſe us to the *perfection* of our Natures, by *mortifying* thoſe *Members*, Col. 3. 5. our *unruly Paſſions* and *Deſires*; and *crucifying* the *Fleſh* with its *Affections* and *Luſts*; Gal. 5. 24. And thereby to make us *humble* in *Proſperity*, *quiet* in *Adverſity*; *meek* under *Provocations*, *ſteady* amidſt *Temptations*, *modeſt* in our *Deſires*, *temperate* in our *Injoyments*, *conſtant* to our *Reſolutions*, and *contented* in all *Conditions*. Here is our great Buſineſs, and our *Work is this*: And certainly 'tis no *eaſie* thing to bring *order* out of a *Chaos*, and to ſpeak a *Tempeſt* in a *Calm*; to *reſiſt* a *Torrent*, and to *ſtop* and *turn* the *Tyde*; to *ſubdue* a *Rebellious* Rabble, and to change them from *Tyrannical* Maſters, to *Modeſt* and *Obedient* Servants: Theſe, no doubt,

are

are works of *difficulty* enough, and theſe muſt be our Imployment in the way of *Religion*; and on this ſcore alſo, the *Gate is ſtraight.*

IV. Our *Work* in *Religion* is yet more *difficult*, upon the account of *Cuſtom*, to which we are ſubject, and by which we are ſwayed much. *This* is vulgarly ſaid to be *another Nature*, and the Apoſtle calls it by *that* name, 1 Cor. 11. 14. *Doth not Nature it ſelf teach you, that if a Man have long Hair, it is a ſhame unto him?* By the word *Nature*, the beſt Interpreters ſay only *Cuſtom* is meant; ſince *long Hair* is not declared *ſhameful* by the Law and Light of Nature, taken in its chief and propereſt ſenſe: For then it had never been permitted to the *Nazarites*: But the *contrary cuſtom*, in the Nations that uſed it not, made it ſeem *ſhameful and indecent.* There are other places in Scripture and ancient Authors, wherein *Nature* is put for *Cuſtom*: But I

muſt

muſt not inſiſt on *this*; the thing I am about is, that *Cuſtom* is very *powerful*; and as it makes a kind of Nature, ſo, many times it *maſters* and *ſubdues* it. Wild Creatures are hereby made gentle and familiar; and thoſe that naturally are tame enough, are made to degenerate into wildneſs by it.

And now beſides the *original* depravities of our Natures, we have *contracted* many *vitious habits* by *corrupt* and *evil* uſages; which we were drawn into at firſt by pleaſure and vanity in our young & inconſiderate years, while we were led by the directions of ſenſe: *Theſe*, by *frequent* acts, grow at laſt into *habits*; which though in their beginning they were *tender* as a Plant, and eaſie to have been cruſht or blaſted, yet *time* and *uſe* hardens them into the firmneſs of an *Oak*, that braves the Weather, and can endure the ſtroak of the Ax and a ſtrong Arm.

Now to deſtroy and root up theſe obſtinate *cuſtomary* evils, is another part

part of our Work. And Religion teacheth us to *put off concerning the Old Conversation, the Old Man*, Eph. 4. 22. and to receive *new Impressions* and *Inclinations*; to be *renewed* in the *Spirit of our Minds*, 5. 23. and to *put on the New Man*, 5. 24. To make us *new Hearts*, Ezek. 18. 31. and to *walk in newness of Life*, Rom. 6. 4. *This* we are to do, and this we may well suppose to be *hard* work; the Scripture compares it to the *changing* the *Skin* of the *Æthiopian*, and the *Spots* of the *Leopard*, Jer. 13. 23. and elsewhere. *How can they do good, that are accustomed to do evil?* Jer. 13. 23. 'Tis *hard*, no doubt; and this is another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

V. The Power that *Example* hath over us, makes the *way* of *Religion difficult*. *Example* is more *prevalent* than *Precept*, for Man is a Creature given much to *Imitation*, and we are very apt to follow what we *see others do*, rather than what we *ought to do our selves*. And

And now the Apoſtle hath told us, That *the whole World lies in wickedneſs*, 1 Joh. 5. 19. and we ſadly find it: we cannot look out of doors, but we ſee *Vanity* and *Folly*, *Senſuality and Forgetfulneſs* of God; *Pride* and *Covetouſneſs*, *Injuſtice* and *Intemperance*, and all other kinds of Evils: Theſe we meet with every where, in *Publick* Companies, and *Private* Converſations; in the *High Ways*, and in the *Corners* of the *Streets*.

The Sum is, *Example* is very *powerful*, and *Examples* of *Vice* are always in our Eyes; we are apt to be reconciled to *that* which *every one doth*, and to do like it; we love the *trodden Path*, and care not to walk in the *Way* which is gone in but by a *few*.

This is our *Condition*, and our *work* in *Religion* is, to *overcome* the ſtrong Biaſs of corrupt *Example*; to *ſtrive* againſt the *Stream*, to learn to be *good*, though *few* are *ſo*, and not to follow *a Multitude to do Evil*, Exod. 23. 2. *This* is our *Buſineſs*;

neſs; and *this* is very *Difficult.*

VI. The laſt *Difficulty* I ſhall mention, ariſeth from *Worldly Intereſts* and *Engagements.* We have many *Neceſſities* to ſerve, both in our Perſons. and our Families. Nature excluded us *naked* into the World, without *Cloathing* for *Warmth*, or *Armature* for *Defence*; and *Food* is not provided to our Hands, as it is for the Beaſts; nor do our *Houſes* grow for our Habitation, and comfortable abode. Nothing is prepared for our uſe without our Induſtry and Endeavours. So that by the *Neceſſity* of *this State*, we are engaged in *Worldly Affairs: Theſe*, *Nature* requires us to mind, and *Religion* permits it; and nothing can be done without our *Care*; and *Care* would be very *troubleſome*, if there were not ſome *Love* to the *Objects* we exerciſe our Cares upon: Hence it is, that *ſome Cares* about the things of *this* world, and *Love* to them is allowed us; and

and we are commanded to continue in the *Calling wherein God hath ſet us*, 1 Cor. 7. 20. and are warned that we be not *ſlothful in Buſineſs*, Rom. 12. 11. We may take *ſome delight* alſo in the Creatures that God gives us, and love them in their *degree*: For the *animal* Life may have its *moderate Gratifications*; *God made all things, that they might enjoy their Being.*

And now, notwithſtanding all *this*, Religion commands us to *ſet our Affections upon things above*, Col. 3. 2. not to *love the World*, 1 Joh. 2. 15. to be *careful for nothing*, Phil. 4. 6. to take no *thought for to morrow*, Mat. 6. 34. The meaning of which Expreſſions is, That we ſhould *love God* and *Heavenly things*, in the *chief* and *firſt place*; and avoid the *immoderate Deſires* of *Worldly Love* and *Cares*. This is our *Duty*: and 'tis very *difficult*: For by reaſon of the *hurry* of *Buſineſs*, and thoſe *Paſſions* that *Earthly* Engagements excite;

we

we *conſider* not things as we ſhould, and *ſo*, many times perceive not the *Bounds* of our *Permiſſions*, and the *Beginnings* of our *Reſtraints*; where the *allowed* Meaſure *ends*, and the *forbidden* Degree *commenceth*: what is the difference between that *Care* that is a *Duty*, and *that* which is a *Sin*; *Providence* and *Carking*; and between *that Love* of the *World* which is *Neceſſary* and *Lawful*, and that which is *Extravagant* and *Inordinate*? I ſay, by reaſon of the hurry we are in, amidſt Buſineſs and worldly Delights, we many times *perceive not our Bounds*, and ſo ſlide eaſily into *Earthly-mindedneſs* and *anxiety*. And it is hard for us, who are engaged ſo much in the World, and who need it ſo much, who converſe ſo much with it and about it, and whoſe time and endeavours are ſo unavoidably taken up by it; I ſay 'tis hard for us, in ſuch Circumſtances, to be *crucified to the World*, Gal. 6. 14. and to all *inordinate Affections*

ſtions to it: to live *above* it and to ſettle our *chief* Delights and Cares on things at great *diſtance* from us, which are *unſuitable* to our *corrupt* Appetites, and *contrary* to the moſt *reliſhing Injoyments* of *Fleſh*; which *Senſe* never *ſaw* nor *felt*, and which the *Imagination* it ſelf could never *graſp*. *This*, no doubt, is *hard Exerciſe*, and this muſt be done in the *way* of *Religion*; and on this Account alſo, it is very *difficult*.

Thus of the Firſt *Propoſition*, *That there are great Difficulties in Religion*. I come now to the *Second*.

II. THat *thoſe Difficulties may be overcome by ſtriving*; which imports both the *Encouragement* and the *Means*; That *they may be vanquiſht*, and *how*.

(I.) That the *Difficulties may be ſubdued*, is clearly enough implyed, in the *Precept*; we ſhould not have been commanded to *ſtrive*, if it had been *impoſſible* to overcome. God doth

doth not put his Creatures upon *fruitleſs* Undertakings: He never requires us to do any thing in order to *that*, which is not to be *attained*. Therefore when he was reſolved not to be intreated for that ſtubborn and rebellious Nation. He would not have the Prophet pray for them, *Jer. 7. 16. Pray not for this People, for I will not hear thee.* He would not be *petitioned* for *that*, which he was determined not to *grant*. He puts not his Creatures upon any *vain* Expectations and Endeavours; nor would he have them deceive themſelves by fond Dependences. When one made this Profeſſion to our Saviour, *Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. Chriſt* tells him, that he muſt expect from him no worldly Honours or Preferments; no Power or ſenſual Pleaſure, no, not ſo much as the ordinary Accommodations of Life. *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Ayre have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.*

Luk.

Luk. 9. 5, 8. He would not have the man that likely might look for *theſe*, upon the opinion of his being the *Meſſias*, in the *Jewiſh* ſenſe, one that ſhould at laſt, whatever the meanneſs of his Condition was at preſent, appear as a *Mighty*, and *Triumphant temporal Monarch*; I ſay, our Saviour would not have the Man follow him for *that*, which he had not to beſtow upon him. Since then that he who would not put us upon *fruitleſs* labours, hath *commanded* us to *ſtrive* to *enter*; 'tis evident, that an entrance may be procured into the Gate by *ſtriving*, and that the *Difficulties* may *be overcome*.

The next thing in my Method is to ſhew, *How*; the *manner* is *implyed* in the *Text*; and *expreſt* in the *Propoſition*, *viz.* By *ſtriving*; and by *this*, is meant, a *reſolute* uſe of thoſe means that are the Inſtruments of Happineſs. They are three, *Faith*, *Prayer*, and *active Endeavour*.

(I.) *Faith* is a *chief* Inſtrument, for the *overcoming* the *Difficulties* of our way.

And *Faith* in the *general*, is the *belief* of a *Teſtimony*; *Divine Faith* the belief of a *Divine* Teſtimony; and the chief things to be believed, as *encouragements* and *means* for a Victory over the Difficulties in Religion, are *theſe*; *That God is reconciled to us by his Son*; *That he will aſſiſt our weak endeavours by the Aids of his Spirit*; *That he will reward us if we ſtrive as we ought, with immortal Happineſs in a World of endleſs Glory.*

By our belief of God's being *reconciled*, we are ſecured from thoſe *fears*, that might diſcourage our approaches and endeavours, upon the account of his *Purity* and *Juſtice*. By the *Faith* of his *Aſſiſtance*, all the *objections* againſt our *ſtriving*, that ariſe from the *greatneſs* of the *Difficulties*, and the *diſproportionate ſmalneſs* of our *Strength*, are anſwered. And from our believing *eternal rewards* in another World, we have a mighty

mighty *motive* to engage our utmoſt diligence, to conteſt with all difficulties that would keep us from it.

What *ſatisfaction* is there, ſaith the believer, in the *gratification* of my *corrupt Inclinations* and *Senſes*, in compariſon with *that*, which ariſeth from the *favour* of *God*, and an *Intereſt* in his *Son?* What difficulties in my *Duty*, *too* great for *Divine* Aids? What *pains* are we to undergo in the *narrow* and *difficult* way, that the *Glory* which is at the end of it, will not *compenſate?* What is it to *deny* a *baſe* Inclination that will undo me; in *obedience* to him that *made*, and *redeemed* me; and to deſpiſe the little things of *preſent* ſenſe, for the hope of *everlaſting enjoyments*; *Trifling* pleaſure, for *Hallelujahs?* What were it for me to ſet *vigorouſly* upon thoſe *Paſſions* that degrade my noble Nature, and make me a *ſlave* and a *beaſt*, and will make me *more* vile, and *more* miſerable; when the *Spirit* of the moſt High is at my *right* hand to aſ-

sist me? Why should my noble Faculties, that were designed for glorious ends, be led into infamous practices by *base Usages*, and *dishonourable Customs?* What is the *example* of a *wicked*, *sensual*, *wretched* World, to *that* of the *Holy Jesus*; and all the *Army* of *Prophets*, *Apostles* and *Martyrs?* What is there in the *World*, that *it* should be *loved* more than *God?* and what is the *Flesh*, that it should have *more* of our *time* and *care*, than the great interests of our Souls?

Such are the *Considerations* of a mind, that *Faith* hath awakened; and by *them* it is prepared for *vigorous striving*. So that *Faith* is the *Spring* of *all*; and *necessary* to the other two *Instruments* of our *Happiness*. Besides which, it is acceptable to God, in it *self*, and so disposeth us for his *gracious helps*, by which we are enabled to overcome the Difficulties of our way. While a man considers the *Difficulties* only, and weighs them against his own *strength*, let him suppose

ſuppoſe the *Liberty* of his *Will* to be what he pleaſeth, yet while 'tis under *ſuch* diſadvantages, *that* will ſignifie very little; and he that ſees no *further*, ſits down in diſcouragement; But when the mind is fortified with the firm belief of *Divine help*, he attempts then with a *noble vigour*, which cannot *miſcarry*, if it do not *cool* and *faint*. For *he that endures to the end, ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. 24. 13. Thus *Faith* ſets the other Inſtruments of Happineſs on work, and therefore 'tis deſervedly reckoned as the *firſt*; and 'tis *that* which muſt always accompany the *exerciſes* of *Religion*, and give them *life* and *motion*.

(II.) *Prayer* is another *means* we muſt uſe, in order to our *overcoming* the *Difficulties* of the way. Our own meer, natural *Strength* is *weakneſs*; and without *ſupernatural* helps thoſe Difficulties are not to be ſurmounted. *Thoſe Aids* are *neceſſary*, and *God* is *ready* to beſtow them on us; For

He would have all men to be ſaved, and *to come to the Knowledge of the Truth,* 1 Tim. 2. 4. But for *theſe things he will be ſought unto.* And 'tis very *juſt,* and *fit* that we ſhould addreſs our ſelves to him by *Prayer,* to acknowledge our own *inſufficiency* and *dependence,* on him for the mercies we expect; and thereby to own *Him* for the *giver* of *every good* and *perfect gift*; and to inſtruct our ſelves how his favours are to be *received* and *uſed, viz.* with *Reverence* and *Thanksgiving:* This, 'tis highly *fit* we ſhould do; and the doing it *prepares* us for his bleſſings; and he fails not to *beſtow* them on thoſe that are *prepared* by *Faith* and *Prayer*; *For he giveth liberally and upbraids not*; And our *Prayers* are required, not as if they could *move* his *will,* which is *always* graciouſly *inclined* to our *Happineſs*; But as it's *that tribute* which we owe our *Maker* and *Benefactor*; and *that* without which 'tis not ſo *fit* he ſhould beſtow his *particular*

ticular favours on us. For it by no means becomes the Divine Majeſty, to vouchſafe the *ſpecialties* of his *Grace* and *Goodneſs* to thoſe, that are not *ſenſible* they *want* them; and are not *humbled* to a *due* apprehenſion of their *weakneſs* and dependence. But for ſuch as are *ſo*, and expreſs their humble deſires in the *Ardours* of *Holy Prayer*, God never *denies* them the *aſſiſtances* of his *Spirit: For if ye being evil* (ſaith our Saviour) *know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to thoſe that ask Him?* Mat. 7. 11.

And *Theſe Divine Helps* obtain'd by *Faith and Prayer*, and join'd with our *active conſtant endeavour*, will not fail to *enable* us to *overcome* the *Difficulties*, and to procure us an entrance at the *ſtraight Gate*. And ſo I come to the *Third Inſtrument* of our *Happineſs*, which is implyed in *ſtriving*, viz.

(III.) *Active Endeavour*, in which *Repentance* and the *fruits* of it are implied; Both *Faith* and *Prayer* are in order to *this*; and without it neither can turn to account. For *Faith without works is dead*, Jam. 2. 20. and *Prayer, without endeavour fruitleſs*; yea indeed, in the Divine Eſtimate, it is *none at all*: 'Tis *bodily* exerciſe; *no Prayer*. For when we invoke *Gods help*, we *deſire* it, that we may *uſe* it; *Divine Grace is not a Treaſure to lay up by us, but an Inſtrument to work with*; and when we pray that God would *aſſiſt* us in our *endeavours*, and *endeavour not at all*, we *mock* God, and *trifle* with him in our Prayers: *Endeavour* then is *neceſſary*, and neceſſary in a degree ſo eminent, that *this* is always included in *Faith* when 'tis taken in the *higheſt* and nobleſt *Evangelical ſenſe*, viz. for the *Faith* which *juſtifies* and *ſaves*; for *that* comprehends *all* thoſe *endeavours*, and their *fruits*, whereby we are made happy.

We

We muſt not expect that God ſhould do *all* (*excluſively*) in the work of our Salvation. He doth *his* part, and we muſt do *ours*; (though we do *that*, by his help too.) *He that made us without our ſelves, will not ſave us without our ſelves*, ſaid the Father. We are commanded to ſeek, *Mat.* 7. 7. To *Run*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. To *fight*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. To *give diligence*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Theſe all* import *Action* and *Endeavour*. And that endeavour muſt not be only a *faint* purpoſe, or *formal* ſervice; but it muſt be imployed in the *higheſt degree* of *Care* and *Diligence*. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence*, Mat. 11. 12. and this violence muſt not be uſed in an *heat*, and *ſudden* fit *only*, that *cools* and *dies*, and contents it ſelf with having been *warm* for a time: But it muſt be a *ſteady* and *conſtant* courſe of *activity*, a continual *ſtriving* to overcome the remaining *difficulties* of the *way*.

We muſt *endeavour vigorouſly* and

conſtantly; and in *that*, (after our *Faith* is ſtrengthened by *deep conſideration*, and *Divine aſſiſtance* implored by *ardent Prayer*) our courſe is,

(1.) *To abſtain from all the outward actions of Sin*, and *to perform the external acts of the contrary Vertues. To ceaſe to do evil*, Iſa. 1. 16. is the firſt ſtep. When the *Publicans* askt *John* the *Baptiſt*, Luke 3. 12. what they ſhould do; His direction was, that they *ſhould not exact*, verſ. 13. and to the *Souldiers*, asking the ſame queſtion, he anſwers, *Do Violence to no man*, verſ. 14. *Theſe* were the ſins of their *particular* Profeſſions, which were to be *quitted*, before any thing could be done *higher*. We have ordinarily more power over our *actions*, than our *habits*, and therefore we ſhould *begin* here, and reſolve deeply, by divine help, to cut off thoſe *ſupplies* that feed *vitious inclinations*; for *wicked habits* are maintain'd by *actions* of *Wickedneſs*; when *they* ceaſe, the *inclinations* grow more *faint*, and

weak:

weak: and when we are come but *thus far*, to have *confined* our *luſts*, we ſhall be encouraged to proceed to deſtroy them. 'Tis ſaid, There is no great diſtance between a *Princes Priſon* and his *Grave*; The ſaying is moſt true in the caſe of *Tyrants* and *Uſurpers*; and the *habits* of ſin are *both*; when they are *reſtrain'd*, they are not far from being *deſtroyed*, if we imploy our endeavours, and the divine aids, as we ought.

This then muſt be done *Firſt*, and the *other* part of the advice muſt be taken with it, *viz.* we *muſt practiſe the outward actions of the contrary Vertues*. We *muſt do well*, when we *ceaſe to do evil*. When we turn from darkneſs, it muſt be to light, *Acts* 26. 18. Not from *one* kind of *darkneſs* to *another*. When we *ceaſe* to *oppreſs*, we muſt be *charitable*; when we leave to *tyrannize* over our *inferiours*, we muſt be *kind* and *helpful* to them. When we forbear to *ſlander*, we muſt *ſpeak* all the *good* we can of our Neighbour. The

The *outward* actions of Vertue are in our *power*; and 'tis ſomewhat to come ſo far as *this*: What is *more*, viz. The *inward love and delight in goodneſs*, will ſucceed in time, if we perſevere. 'Tis not ſafe for us to propoſe to our ſelves the greateſt heights at firſt; if we do, we are diſcouraged, and fall back. God accepts even of that *little*, if it be in order to *more*. He deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things, *Zech.* 4. 10. If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? Chriſt *loved* the *young man* who had kept the *external* part of the *Commandments*, Mark 10. 12. If he had had the courage to have proceeded; what he had done, would have ſteaded him much. The *inward* love of *Vertue* and *Holineſs* is promoted by the *outward* exerciſes of them, and hereby the *contrary* evils are both *pined* and *thruſt out*.

Thus of the *Firſt* thing that *Endeavour* implies; upon this muſt follow,

(2.) *An attempt upon evil habits*, viz.

Thoſe

Thoſe that have been ſuper-induced on us by *Careleſneſs* and *Temptation*, bad *Cuſtoms* and *evil Company*. *Every victory is a means to another*; *we* grow *ſtronger*, and the *enemy weaker* by it. To have overcome the *outward* acts of ſin, is a *beginning* in our *ſpiritual* warfare; but our *chief* enemies are the *habits*; *theſe* muſt be attempted alſo, but with *Prudence*; wild *Beaſts* are not to be dealt with by *main ſtrength*; Art and Stratagem muſt be uſed in this War; and 'tis *good policy*, I think here, to fight the *leaſt* powerful foes *firſt*, the *contracted* habits, before we fall on the *inbred natural* Inclinations. While our forces are weak, 'tis dangerous ſetting upon the ſtrongeſt holds, *viz.* the vices of *Complexion*, which are woven into our *very Natures*. If a man apply all his *force* where he hath not *reſolution* enough to go through with what he undertakes, he receives a foyl, and 'tis odds but he ſits down and faints. *Prudence* therefore is to

be

be used, where we distrust our strength: Fall upon *Sin*, where 'tis *weakest*, where it hath *least* of *Nature*, and least of *Temptation*; and where we have arguments from *Reputation* and *worldly Interests* wherewith to war against it. If we *prevail*, we are heartned by the *success*: Our *Faith* and *Resolution* will grow *stronger* by this experience, when we have triumph't over the sins of *evil Custom*, *Example*, and *sensual Indulgence*.

And when that is done, we must remember that 'tis not enough that those *habits* are thrust out; *others* must be planted in their *room*: when the soyl is *prepared*, the *seed* must be sown, and the *seeds* of vertuous *habits*, are the *actions* of vertue. These I recommended under the last head, and shall say more of the introducing of *habits*, under *one* that follows on purpose.

(3.) The next advance in our endeavours, is, In the Strength of God, and in the Name of his Son, to assault the greater Devils, and to strive

to

to caſt out them; I mean the *Sins* of *Complexion*, and *particular* Nature. This is a *great* work, and will require *ſtrong Faith*, and *many Prayers*, and *much Time*, and *great Watchfulneſs*, and *invincible Reſolution*: Imploy *theſe heartily*; and though thou now and then mayſt receive a foyl, yet give not off ſo, but riſe again in the ſtrength of *God*, implore *new* aid, and fortifie thy ſelf with *more* conſiderations, and *deeper* reſolves; and *then* renew the *Combat* upon the *encouragement* of *Divine Aſſiſtance*, and *Chriſt's Merits* and *Interceſſion*, and the *promiſe* that ſin *ſhall not have Dominion over us*, Rom. 6. 14.

Remember, that *this* is the *great* work, and the biggeſt *difficulty*; if this be not overcome, all our *other labour* hath been in *vain*, and will be *loſt*. If this *root* remain, it will ſtill bear *poyſonous* fruit, which will be *matter* for *Temptation*, and occaſion of *continual falling*; and we ſhall be in danger of being reconciled again

to

to our *old* sins, and to *undo* all; and so *our latter end will be worse than our beginning*, 2 Pet. 2. 20. Or, at least, though we stand at a stay, and satisfie our selves with *that*; yet though we are *contented*, our condition is not *safe*.

If we will endeavour to any purpose of *duty*, or *security*, we must *proceed* still after our *lesser conquests*, till the *sins* of *Complexion* are laid *dead* at our feet. He that is born of *God*, sinneth not, and he cannot sin, 1. *Joh.* 3. 9. Till we come to *this*, we are but *strugling* in the *Birth*.

Such a *perfection* as is *mortifying* of *vitious temper*, is *I* hope *attainable*, and 'tis no doubt that which *Religion* aims at; and though it be a *difficult height*, yet we must not sit down this side: At least we must be always pressing on to this Mark: if Providence *cut* off our days before we have arrived to it, we may expect acceptance of the *sincerity* of our endeavours, upon the account of the *merits* of our Saviour:

Saviour: For he hath procured favour for thoſe *ſincere* Believers and Endeavoureres, whoſe Day is done before their work is compleated; *this I* mean, of ſubduing the *darling* ſins of their *particular Natures.*

But then if we *reſt*, and pleaſe our ſelves with the *little Victories* and Attainments, and let theſe our *great Enemies* quietly alone, 'tis an argument our *endeavours* are not *ſincere*, but much ſhort of that *ſtriving*, which will procure an *entrance* into the *ſtraight Gate.* The next thing (and 'tis the laſt *I* ſhall mention) which is implyed in *ſtriving*, is,

(4.) *To furniſh our ſelves, through Divine Grace, with the Habits and Inclinations of Holineſs and Vertue.* For *Goodneſs* to become a kind of *Nature* to the Soul, is *height* indeed; but ſuch a one as *may* be reacht: the new Nature, and new Creature, *Gal. 6. 15.* are not meer names.

We have obſerv'd that ſome men are of a *Natural Generoſity, Veracity* and

and *Sweetneſs*; and they *cannot* act contrary to theſe *Native* Vertues without a mighty *Violence:* why now ſhould not the *New Nature* be as *powerful* as the *Old?* And why may not the *Spirit of God*, working by an active Faith and Endeavour, fix *Habits* and *Inclinations* on the Soul, as prevalent as *thoſe?* No doubt, it *may*, and *doth*, upon the Diviner Souls: For whom to do a *wicked*, or *unworthy Action*, 'twould be as *violent* and *unnatural*, as for the *meek* and *compaſſionate* temper to *butcher* the *innocent*; or for him, that is *naturally juſt*, to *oppreſs* and make a *prey* of the *Fatherleſs* and the *Widow*. I ſay, ſuch a *degree* of *perfection* as this, ſhould be aim'd at, *Heb.* 6. 1. and we ſhould not ſlacken or intermit our endeavours till it be attain'd.

In order to it, we are to uſe frequent *meditation* on the *excellency* and *pleaſure* of Vertue and Religion; and *earneſt Prayer* for the *Grace* of God; and *diligent attendance* upon the *publick*

lick worſhip; and *pious* Company and Converſes: For this great *deſign*, theſe helps are requiſite, and if we exerciſe our ſelves in them as we ought, they will *fire* our Souls with the *love* of God and Goodneſs; and ſo at laſt, *all* Chriſtian *Vertues* will become as *natural* to us, as *ſin* was before. And to *one* that is ſo *prepared*, the *Gate* of *Happineſs* will be *open*, and of *eaſie* entrance; the *difficulties* are *overcome*, and from henceforth the *way* is *pleaſant* and plain before him, *Prov.* 3. 17.

Thus *I* have ſhewn, that the *formidable difficulties* may be *overcome*, and *How*: 'tis a *plain courſe I* have *directed*, that will not puzzle mens *underſtandings* with *needleſs niceties*, nor *diſtract* their *memories* with *multitudes*. Let us walk in this way, and do it *conſtantly*, with *vigour* and *alacrity*; and there is no fear, but in the *Strength of* God, through the *merits* and *mediation* of his Son, we ſhall *overcome*, and at laſt *enter*.

I had now done with this *general* Head,

Head, but that 'tis neceſſary to note three things more.

(1.) Thoſe *Inſtruments* of our Happineſs which we muſt uſe in *ſtriving*, viz. *Faith*, *Prayer*, and *active Endeavour*, *muſt all of them be imployed.* Not any *one* ſingly, will do the great work; nor can the *others*, if *any one* be wanting. If we *believe*, and do not *pray*; or *pray*, and *do not endeavour*; or *endeavour*, without *thoſe*, the *Difficulties* will remain, and 'twill be impoſſible for us to *enter*.

(2.) *We muſt be diligent in our courſe*: If we do not exerciſe *Faith vigorouſly*, and *pray heartily*, and *endeavour with our whole might*, the means will not ſucceed; and 'tis as good not at all, as not to purpoſe. The Difficulties will not be overcome by *cold Faith*, or *ſleepy Prayers*, or *remiſs Endeavours*: A very *intenſe degree* of theſe is *neceſſary*.

(3.) *Our ſtriving muſt be conſtant*; we muſt not *begin*, and *look back*, Heb. 10. 38. or *run* a while, and *ſtop* in

in *midd* courſe, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. and content our ſelves with *ſome* attainments, and think we have *arrived*, Phil. 3. 14. If we do ſo, we ſhall find our ſelves dangerouſly miſtaken. The *Crown* is at the *end* of the *Warfare*, & the *Priſe* at the *end* of the *Race*. If we will ſucceed, we muſt hold on: *The life of one that ſtrives as he ought, muſt be a continual motion forwards*; always *proceeding*, always *growing*.

If we *ſtrive thus*, we cannot *fail*; if any of theſe *qualifications* be wanting, we *cannot but* miſcarry. And hence no doubt it is, that many that *ſeek* to *enter*, *ſhall not be able*, and the preſumed ſons of the Kingdom are ſhut out, *Mat.* 8. 12. They *ſeek*, and are very deſirous to be admitted; They do *ſome* thing, and *ſtrive*; but their *ſtriving* is *partial*, or *careleſs*, or *ſhort*; by reaſon of which defects, they *do* not *overcome*, and *ſhall* not *enter*.

This is a *dangerous* Rock, and perhaps there are as many undone by *cold* and *half ſtriving*, as by not *ſtri-*

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ving at all. He that hath done *some* thing, *presumes* he is *secure*; He goes the round of ordinary Duties, but advanceth nothing in his way; He *overcometh* none of the great *Difficulties*, none of the *Habits* or *depraved Inclinations*; He is contented with *other* things that make a more *glorious shew*; though they *signifie less*; and perhaps despiseth *these*, under the notion of *Morality*; and so presuming, that he is a *Saint too soon*, he never comes to be *one at all:* such are the *Seekers that shall not be able to enter:* Their *seeking* imports *some striving*; but 'tis *such*, as, though it be *specious*, yet it is *imperfect*, and will not succeed. And hence the *Third Proposition* ariseth, that I proposed to discourse.

(III.) THat *there is a sort of Striving that will not procure an entrance:* implyed in these words, *For many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

'Tis a dangerous thing to be flattered

tered into a *falſe peace*; and to take up with *imperfect Godlineſs*; to reconcile the *hopes* of *Heaven* to our *beloved ſins*, and to judge our condition *ſafe* upon *inſufficient grounds*. *This* multitudes *do*, and 'tis the great danger of our days; Men cannot be *contented* without doing *ſomething* in Religion; but they are *contented with a little*. And then they reckon themſelves *godly*, before they are *vertuous*; and take themſelves to be *Saints*, upon ſuch things as will not diſtinguiſh a *good man* from a *bad*.

We ſeek after *Marks* of *Godlineſs*, and would be glad to know, *how* we might try our ſtate: The thing is of great importance; and if the *Signs* we judge by are either *falſe*, or *imperfect*, we are deceived to our undoing. Meer *Speculative* miſtakes about Opinions, do no great hurt; but errour in the *Marks* and *Meaſures* of *Religion* is deadly. Now there are ſundry things commonly taken for *ſigns* of *Godlineſs*, which though

though they are *ſomething*, yet they are not *enough*; They are *hopeful* for *beginnings*, but nothing worth when they are our *end* and *reſt*. They are a kind of *ſeeking* and *imperfect ſtriving*; but not *ſuch* as *overcometh* the *difficulties* of the way, or will procure us an *entrance* at the *Gate*. Therefore to diſable the *flattering*, *inſufficient Marks* of *Godlineſs*, I ſhall diſcover in purſuance of the *Third Propoſition*, *How far a man may ſtrive in the exerciſes of Religion, and yet be found at laſt among thoſe ſeekers that ſhall not be able to enter*. And though I have intimated ſomething of this in the general before, yet I ſhall now more particularly ſhew it in the *inſtances* that follow. And in *theſe* I ſhall diſcover a *Religion* that may be called *Animal*, to which the *natural* man may attain.

(I.) *A Man may believe the Truths of the Goſpel, and aſſent heartily to all the Articles of the Creed:* and if he

he *proceeds* not, he is no further by *this*, than the *faith* of *Devils*, Jam. 2. 19.

(2.) He may go on, *and have a great thirſt to be more acquainted with Truth*; He may ſeek it diligently in *Scripture*, and *Sermons*, and good *Books*, and *knowing Company*; And yet *do this*, by the *motion* of no *higher Principle*, than an *inbred* Curioſity, and *deſire* of *Knowledg*; and many times this *earneſtneſs* after *Truth*, proceeds from a *proud effectation* to wiſer than our Neighbours, that we may *pity* their *darkneſs*; or the itch of a *diſputing* humour, that we may out talk them; or a deſign to carry on, or make a party, that we may be called *Rabbi*, or ſerve an Intereſt: and the *zeal* for *Truth* that is ſet on work by ſuch motives, is a *ſpark* of that *fire* that is from *beneath*: 'Tis *dangerous* to a *mans ſelf*, and to the *publick Weal* of the *Church* and *mankind*, but the man proceeds, and is,

(3.) *Very much concern'd to defend and propagate his Faith*; and the Phariſees were ſo in relation to theirs, *Matt.* 23. 15. and *ſo* have been many Profeſſors of *all* the Religions that are, or ever were. Men *naturally* love their *own* Tenents, and are ambitious to mould *others judgments* according to *theirs*. There is *glory* in being an *Inſtructer* of other men; and turning them to *our ways* and *opinions*: So that here is nothing yet *above* Nature; nothing but what may be found in *many* that *ſeek*, and are *ſhut out*. But,

(4.) *Faith* works greater effects than *theſe*, and *Men offer themſelves to Martyrdom for it*; *This*, one would think, ſhould be the *greateſt* height, and an argument that *all* the *difficulties* of the way, are *overcome* by one that is *ſo reſolved*; and that the *Gate* cannot but be *opened* to him. And ſo, no doubt *it is*, *when all things elſe are ſutable*: But otherwiſe *theſe* conſequences by no means follow.

St.

St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth that a man may give his *Body to be burned*, and not have *Charity*, without which his *Martyrdom* will not profit, 1 *Cor.* 13. For one to *deny* his Religion, or what he believes to be *certain*, and of *greateſt conſequence*, is *diſhonourable* and *baſe*: and *ſome* out of principles of meer *natural bravery*, will *die* rather than they will do it; and yet, upon other accounts be far enough from being *heroically vertuous*. Beſides, the deſire of the *glory* of *Martyrdom* and *Saintſhip* after it, may in *ſome* be *ſtronger* than the *terrours* of *Death*: and we ſee frequently, that men will ſacrifice their *lives* to their *Honour* and Reputation; yea to the moſt contemptible *ſhadows* of it. And there is no *paſſion* in us ſo *weak*, no *luſt* ſo *impotent*, but hath, in many inſtances, prevail'd over the *fear of dying*. *Every Appetite* hath had its *Martyrs*; and all *Religions theirs*; and though a man give his Body to be burnt for the *beſt*, and have not

Charity, viz. *Prevalent love to God and Men*, it will not ſignifie: So that *Martyrdom* is no infallible *mark*, nor will it avail any thing, except *ſincere endeavour* to *overcome* the greater *difficulties*, have gone before it. Thus far *Faith* may go without effect: and yet one ſtep further.

(5.) *Men may confidently rely upon Chriſt for Salvation, and be firmly perſwaded that he hath juſtified, and will make them happy.* They may *appropriate* him to themſelves, and be pleaſed mightily in the opinion of his being *theirs*. And yet notwithſtanding this confidence may be in the number of thoſe *ſeekers* that ſhall not *enter*. For Chriſt is the Author of *Eternal life*, only *to thoſe that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. and to *obey* him, is to *ſtrive vigorouſly* and *conſtantly*, to *overcome* all our *ſinful Inclinations* and *Habits*. And thoſe that *truſt* he will ſave them, though they have never ſeriouſly ſet about *this work*, deceive themſelves by vain preſumption, and in effect

ſay,

say, that he will dissolve or dispense with his Laws in their favour. For he requires us to *deny our selves*, Mar. 8. 34. *To mortifie the body*, Rom 8. 13. *To love enemies*, Mat. 5. 44. *To be meek*, Mat. 11. 29. *and patient*, Jam. 5. 8. *and humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. *and just*, Mat. 7. 12. *and charitable*, Heb. 13. 16. *and Holy, as he that called us is holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. And he hath promised to save upon no other terms; For all *these* are included in *Faith*, when 'tis taken in the *justifying* sense; and *this* is the *Way* of *Happiness* and *Salvation*: If we walk not in *this*, but in the paths of our own choosing, our *relying upon Christ* is a *mockery*, and will deceive us.

We *may* indeed be *confident*, and we *ought*, that he will *save* all those that *so believe* as to *obey* him; but may not trust that he will save us except we are some of those. To *rely upon Christ for our Salvation, must follow our sincere and obedient striving, and not go before it.* The mistake

of this is exceeding dangerous, and I doubt hath been fatal to many. The ſum is to *rely on Chriſt*, without a *reſolute* and *ſteady* endeavour to overcome every ſin and temptation, will gain us nothing in the end but ſhame and diſſappointment: *For 'tis not every one that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into Heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father which is in Heaven.* Mat. 7.21. The fooliſh Virgins relyed upon him, and expected he ſhould open to them; *Lord, Lord, open to us*, Mat. 25. 11. but he kept them out, and would not *know* them, *v.* 11.

Thus of the *Firſt* imperfect *Mark* of *Godlineſs*; *A man may upon the account of meer Nature, arrive to all the mentioned degrees of Faith; and yet if his endeavours in the practice of Chriſtian vertues be not ſuitable, he will certainly come ſhort at laſt.*

(II.) A man may be very *devout*, given much to *Prayer*, and be very *frequent*

frequent and *earneſt* in *it*; He may have the *gift* of *expreſſing* himſelf *fluently*, without the help of *Form* or *Meditation*: yea, and ſo *intent* and taken up in theſe exerciſes, that he may as it were be raviſh't out of himſelf by the *fervours* of his *Spirit*; ſo that he really kindles very *high Affections* as well in others, as in himſelf: And yet if he *reſts* in *this*, and ſuch like things as *Religion*, and reckons that he is accepted of God for it; if he allow himſelf in any *unmortified* luſts, and thinks to *compound* for them by his *Prayers*, he is *an evil man* notwithſtanding, and one of thoſe *ſeekers* that ſhall *not be able to enter*. The *Phariſees*, we know, were *much given* to *Prayer:* They were *long* in thoſe *Devotions*, and very *earneſt in them*, often repeating the ſame expreſſions out of vehemence. *Ignatius Loyola*, founder of the Jeſuites, was a man almoſt *ecſtatical* in his *Prayers*; and *Hacket* the Blaſphemer, executed in the days of

Queen *Elizabeth*, was a perſon of *Seraphical Devotion*, and would *pray* thoſe that heard him even into *tranſports*. *Baſilides* the cruel Duke of *Moſco*, is ſaid to have his hands almoſt continually lifted up in Prayer, except when they were imployed in ſome barbarous and bloody Execution: And we have *known* and *felt* one not much unlike him. There are infinite inſtances in our days of this *dangerous* ſort of *evil men*.

And we may learn hence, that the greateſt gift of *Prayer*, and *earneſtneſs* and *frequency* in it, is no good *mark* of *Godlineſs*, except it be attended with *ſincere*, *conſtant* and *vertuous* endeavours.

For ſome men have a *natural ſpice* of *Devotion* in a *Religious Melancholy*, which is their temper; and *ſuch* have commonly *ſtrong Imaginations* and *zealous affections*, which when they are heated, *flame forth* into great *heights* and *expreſſions* of *Devotion*: The *warm Fancy* furniſheth *words* and

and *matter* readily and unexpectedly, which many times begets in the man a conceit that he is *inſpired*, and that his *Prayers* are the *breathings* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; or at leaſt, that he is *extraordinarily* aſſiſted by it; which belief kindles his affections yet *more*, and he is carryed beyond himſelf, even into the *third Heavens*, and *Suburbs* of *Glory*, as he fancies, and *ſo* he makes no doubt, but that he is a *Saint* of the *firſt* rank, and ſpecial favourite of Heaven; when all this while, he may be really a *bad* man full of *Envy* and *Malice*; *Pride* and *Covetouſneſs*; *Scorn* and *ill Nature*; *contempt of his Betters*, and *diſobedience to his Governours*. And while it is *ſo*, notwithſtanding thoſe *glorious* things, he is no further than the *Phariſee*. *Hearty* and *humble deſire*, though *imperfectly* expreſt, and without this *pomp*, and thoſe *wonders*, is far more acceptable to God, who delights not in the *exerciſes* of *meer Nature* Pſal. 147. 10. but is well pleaſed with

the expreſſions of *Grace* in thoſe that fear him.

So that a *ſincere* and *lowly-minded* Chriſtian that talks of no *immediate* incomes, or *communications*; and perhaps durſt not, out of *reverence*, truſt to his own preſent conceptions in a work ſo *ſolemn*, but uſeth the help of ſome *pious form* of words ſutable to his *defires* and *wants*, who is duly *ſenſible* of his *ſins*, and the neceſſity of *overcoming* them; and is *truly* and *earneſtly* deſirous of the Divine *aids*, in order to it: ſuch a one as *this* Prays by the Spirit, and will be aſſiſted by it; while the *other* doth all by *meer Nature* and *Imitation*, and ſhall not have thoſe *ſpiritual* aids which he never *heartily defires* nor *intends* to *uſe*.

This, I think, I may *truly* and *ſafely* ſay: But for the Controverſie between *Forms* and *Conceived Prayers*, which of them is *abſolutely beſt*, I determine nothing of it here. And indeed I ſuppoſe that in their own nature,

nature, they are alike indifferent, and are more or leſs accepted, as they partake more or leſs of the *Spirit* of *Prayer*, viz. of *Faith*, *Humility* and *holy deſire* of the good things we pray for; and a man may *have theſe* that prays by a *Form*; and he may *want* them that takes the *other* way, and thinks himſelf in a diſpenſation much above it. So that my buſineſs is not to ſet up one of theſe ways of Devotion againſt the other, but to ſhew, that the *heights* and vehemencies of many *warm* people in their *unpremeditated* Prayers, have nothing in them *ſupernatural* or *Divine*, and conſequently, of themſelves, they are no *marks* of *Godlineſs*: which I hope no one thinks I ſpeak to diſcredit thoſe *pious* ardours that are felt by *really devout* Souls, when a *vigorous* ſenſe of God, and Divine things, doth even ſometimes tranſport them: Far be it from me to deſign any thing ſo *impious*; my aim is only to note, that there are *complexional heats* raiſed

ſed many times by *fancy* and *ſelf-admiration*, that look like *theſe*, in perſons who really have little of God in them; and we ſhould take care that we are not deceived by them. *Thus far* alſo thoſe may go that *ſhall not enter*. I add,

(III.) *A man may endeavour ſomewhat, and ſtrive in ſome degree, and yet his work may miſcarry, and himſelf with it.*

(1.) There is no doubt, but that an evil man may be *convinced* of his *ſin* and *vileneſs*, and that even to *anguiſh* and *torment*. The *Gentiles* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 14. *which have not the Law, ſhew the works of the Law written in their Hearts, their thoughts in the mean time accuſing, or excuſing one another.* Conſcience often ſtings and diſquiets the vileſt ſinners; and ſometimes extorts from them *lamentable confeſſions* of their ſins, and *earneſt declamations* againſt them. They may *weep bitterly* at their remembrance, and be under great

great heavineſs and dejection upon their occaſion. They may *ſpeak vehemently* againſt ſin themſelves, and love to have others to handle it ſeverely. All this bad men may do upon the ſcore of *natural fear*, and *ſelf love*, and the *apprehenſion* of a *future judgment*. And now ſuch *convictions* will *naturally* beget ſome *endeavours*: A *convinced underſtanding* will have ſome influence upon the *will* and *affections*. The *mind* in the *unregenerate*, may luſt againſt the *Fleſh*, as *that* doth againſt *it*.

So that (2.) ſuch a meer *animal man* may *promiſe*, and *purpoſe*, and *endeavour* in ſome pretty conſiderable meaſure; but then, he goes not on with *full* Reſolution, but *wavers* and *ſtops*, and *turns about* again; and lets the *law* of the *members*, that of *death* and *ſin*, to prevail over him. His *endeavour* is *remiſs*, and conſequently *ineffectual*; it makes no *conqueſts*, and will not *ſignifie*. He *ſins on*, though with *ſome regret*; and his very

very unwillingneſs to ſin, while he commits it, is ſo far from *leſſening*, that it *aggravates* his *fault*: It argues that he ſins againſt *conſcience* and *conviction*; and that *ſin* is ſtrong and reigns.

'Tis true indeed, St. *Paul*, Rom. 7. makes ſuch a deſcription ſeemingly of *himſelf*, as one might think concluded him under this ſtate; he ſaith verſ. 8. *That ſin wrought in him all manner of concupiſcence:* verſ. 9. *That ſin revived, and he died:* verſ. 14. *That he was carnal*; and again, *ſold under ſin*, verſ. 20. *That ſin dwelt in him, and wrought that which he would not:* verſ. 23. *That the Law of his Members led him into captivity to the law of Sin:* and verſ. 25. *That he obeyed the law of ſin.*

If this be *ſo*, and St. *Paul*, a *regenerate man*, was in *this* ſtate, it will follow, that *ſeeking* and *feeble endeavour*, that overcometh no difficulty, may yet *procure* an *entrance*, and he that is come hitherto, *viz.* to *endeavour*,

vour, is *ſafe* enough though he do not conquer.

This objection preſſeth not only againſt *this head*, but againſt my whole Diſcourſe, and the Text it ſelf. Therefore to anſwer it, I ſay, That the St. *Paul* here is not to be underſtood of *himſelf*; He deſcribes the *ſtate of* a convinced, but *unregenerate man*, though he ſpeaks in the firſt perſon; a *Figure* that was ordinary with *this* Apoſtle, and *frequent* enough in common ſpeech: Thus we ſay, *I am thus*, and *thus*, and did *ſo*, and *ſo*, when we are deſcribing a ſtate, or actions in which perhaps we, in perſon, are not concerned.

In this ſenſe the beſt Expoſitors underſtand theſe expreſſions, and thoſe excellent Divines of our own, Biſhop *Taylor*, and Dr. *Hammond*, and others have noted to us, That this *deſcription* is directly contrary to all the *Characters* of a *regenerate man*, given elſewhere by *this*, and the other Apoſtles. As he is ſaid to be *dead to*

ſin

ſin, Rom. 6. 11. *Free from ſin*, and the *ſervant of Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 18. That *he walks not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. *That the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made him free from the Law of ſin and death*, Rom. 8. 2. *That he overcometh the world*, Joh. 5. 4. *He ſinneth not*, 1 Joh. 3. 6. *He hath crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts*, Gal. 5. 24. Which *Characters* of a *truly regenerate* perſon, if they be compared with thoſe above-cited out of *Rom.* 7. it will appear, that they are as contrary, as 'tis poſſible to ſpeak, and by this, 'tis evident that they deſcribe the *two contrary ſtates.*

For can the *regenerate* be *full* of all *manner* of *concupiſcence*, and at the ſame time be *crucified to the Fleſh*, and its *affections* and *luſts? one* in whom *ſin revives while he dies*; and yet one that is *dead to ſin? carnal*, and yet *not walking after the fleſh, but after the Spirit? ſold under ſin*, and

yet

yet *free from ſin? Having ſin dwelling in him; and a captive to ſin; and obeying the Law of ſin;* and yet *free from the law of ſin and death?* how can theſe things conſiſt? To tell us, *'Tis ſo*, and *'tis not ſo*, and to twiſt ſuch *contradictions* into *Orthodox Paradoxes*, are pretty things to pleaſe *Fools* and *Children*; but *wiſe men* care not for *riddles* that are not ſenſe. For my part I think it clear, that the Apoſtle in that miſtaken Chapter, relates the *feeble, impotent condition* of *one* that was *convinced* and *ſtrove a little*, but not to *purpoſe*. And if we find our ſelves compriſed under that *deſcription*, though we may be never ſo ſenſible of the *evil* and *danger* of a *ſinful courſe*, and may *endeavour* ſome ſmall matter, but without *ſucceſs*, we are yet under *that evil*, and *obnoxious* to *that danger*: For he that *ſtrives* in *earneſt*, *conquers at laſt*, and *advanceth ſtill*, though all the *work* be not *done at once*. So that if we *endeavour* and *gain* nothing, our endeavour is *peccant*, and wants *Faith*.

or

or *Prayer* for *Divine aids*, or *conſtancy*, or *vigour*; and ſo, *Though we may ſeek, we ſhall not be able to enter.*

But (3) an *imperfect Striver* may *overcome* ſin in *ſome* Inſtances, and yet in *that* do no great matter neither, if he *lies down*, and goes no *further*: There are *ſome* ſins we outgrow by *age*, or are indiſpoſed to them by *bodily infirmity*, or diverted by *occaſions*, and it may be by other ſins; and *ſome* are contrary to *worldly Intereſts*, to our *credit*, or *health*, or *profit*; and when we have in any great degree been hurt by *them* in *theſe*, we fall out with *thoſe* ſins, and *ceaſe* from them, and ſo by *reſolution* and *diſuſe*, we maſter them at laſt fully: which, if we went on, and attempted upon all the reſt, were ſomething: But when we ſtop ſhort in theſe *petty* victories, our *general ſtate* is not *altered*; He that conquers *ſome* evil appetites, is yet a ſlave to *others*; and though he hath *prevailed* over *ſome difficulties*, yet the *main ones* are yet behind. Thus

Thus the *imperfect Striver* maſters, it may be, his beaſtly appetite to *intemperate* drinking, but is yet under the power of *Love* and *Riches*, and *vain Pleaſure*. He ceaſeth from open *debauchery*, but entertains *ſpiritual wickedneſs* in his heart: He will not *Swear*, but will *backbite* and *rail*: He will not be *Drunk*, but will *damn* a man for not being of *his opinion*: He will not *prophane the Sabbath*, but will *defraud* his Neighbour.

Now theſe *half* conqueſts, when we *reſt* in *them*, are as good as *none* at all. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have regard to all thy Commandments*, ſaith the Kingly Prophet, *Pſal.* 119. 6. 'Tis *ſhameful* to give off, when our work is but *half* done; *what* we *do*, caſts the greater reproach upon us for what we omit. To *ceaſe to be prophane*, is ſomething as a *paſſage*, but nothing for *an end*. We are not *Saints* as ſoon as we are *civil*. 'Tis not only *groſs ſins* that are to be

be *overcome.* The *wages of ſin is death*, not only of the *great* and *capital*, but of the *ſmalleſt*, if they are indulged. The *Phariſee* applauded himſelf, that he was not like the *Extortioners*, *Adulterers* and *Unjuſt*, nor like the *Publican*, that came to pray with him, *Luk.* 18. 11. and yet he went away never the more *juſtified.* The *unwiſe Virgins* were no *profligate Livers*, and yet they were *ſhut out.*

He that will enter, muſt ſtrive againſt *every* corrupt appetite and inclination. A *leſs* leak will ſink a Ship, as well as a *greater*, if no care be taken of it. A *Conſumption* will *kill*, as well as the *Plague*; yea ſometimes the *leſs* Diſeaſe may in the event prove more deadly, than the *greater*; for ſmall diſtempers may be neglected, till they become *incurable*; when as the *great* ones awaken us to ſpeedy care for a remedy. A *ſmall* hurt in the finger *ſlighted*, may prove a *Gangreen*, when a *great wound* in the

the *Head* by ſeaſonable applications is *cured*.

'Tis unſafe then to content our ſelves with *this*, that our ſins are not *foul* and *great*, *thoſe* we account *little ones*, may prove as *fatal*, yea they are ſometimes more *dangerous*: For we are apt to think them *none at all*, or *Venial infirmities* that may conſiſt with *a ſtate of Grace*, and Divine favour; we *excuſe* and make Apologies for them, and fancy that *Hearing*, and *Prayer*, and *Confeſſion* are atonements enough for *theſe*. Upon which accounts I am apt to believe, that the leſs notorious Vices have ruined as many as the greateſt Abominations. Hell doth not conſiſt only of *Drunkards*, and *Swearers*, and *Sabbath-breakers*: No, the *demure Phariſee*, the *plauſible Hypocrite*, and *formal Profeſſor*, have their place alſo in *that lake* of fire. The *great* impieties do often *ſtartle* and *awaken* conſcience, and beget ſtrong convictions, and ſo ſometimes excite reſolution

lution and vigorous ſtriving; while men hug themſelves in their *leſſer ſins*, and carry them unrepented of to their Graves.

The ſum is, we may *overcome ſome ſins*, and turn from the *groſſer ſorts* of *wickedneſs*, and yet if we endeavour not to ſubdue the *reſt*, we are ſtill in the condition of *unregeneracy* and *death*, and though we *thus ſeek*, we ſhall not *enter*.

(4.) *A man may perform many duties of Religion, and that with reliſh and delight, and yet miſcarry.* As,

(1.) He may be *earneſt* and *ſwift* to *hear*, and follow Sermons conſtantly from one place to another, and be exceedingly pleaſed and affected with the Word, and yet be an *evil Man*, and in a *bad ſtate*. *Herod heard John Baptiſt gladly*, Mark 6. 20. and he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, received it *joyfully*, Mat. 13. 20. *Zeal* for *hearing* doth not always ariſe from a *conſciencious* deſire to learn in order to *practiſe*, but ſometimes

ſometimes it proceeds from an itch after *novelty* and *notions*, or an ambition to be *famed* for *Godlineſs*; or the *importunity* of natural *conſcience*, that will not be ſatisfied except we *do ſomething*; or a deſire to get matter to *feed* our *opinions*, or to furniſh us with *pious* diſcourſe? I ſay, *earneſtneſs* to *hear*, ariſeth very often from ſome of theſe; and when it doth *ſo*, we gain but *little by it*: yea, we are dangerouſly tempted to take this for an *infallible token* of our *Saintſhip*, and ſo to content our ſelves with this *Religion* of the *Ear*, and to diſturb every body with the abundance of our *diſputes* and *talk*, while we neglect our own *Spirits*, and let our *unmortified affections* and *inclinations* reſt in quiet, under the ſhadow of theſe *ſpecious* ſervices.

So that when a great *affection* to *hearing* ſeizeth upon an *evil man*, 'tis odds but it doth him *hurt*; it puffs him up in the *conceit* of his *Godlineſs*,

neſs, and makes him *pragmatical*, *troubleſome* and *cenſorious*; He turns his *food* into *poyſon*: *Among bad men, thoſe are certainly the worſt, that have an opinion of their being godly*; and ſuch are thoſe that have *itching ears*, under the power of *vitious habits* and *inclinations*. Thus an *earneſt diligent* hearer, may be one of thoſe who *ſeeks*, and is *ſhut out*. And ſo may

(2.) He that *Faſts* much, and *ſeverely*: The *Jews* were exceedingly given to *faſting*, and they were very ſevere in it. They abſtained from all things pleaſant to them, and put on *ſackcloth*, and *ſowre looks*, and *mourned bitterly*, and *hung down* the head, and *ſate* in *aſhes*; ſo that one might have taken theſe for very *holy*, *penitent*, *mortified people* that had a great *antipathy* againſt their *ſins*, and *abhorrence* of *themſelves* for them: And yet God complains of theſe *ſtrict ſevere Faſters*, Zach. 7. 5. *That they did not Faſt unto him*; but faſted for

for *ſtrife* and *debate*, Iſa. 58. 4. Their *Faſts* were not *ſuch as he had choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppreſſed free*, verſ. 6. But they continued, notwithſtanding their *Faſts*, and God's admonitions by his Prophets, to *oppreſs the Widow, and Fatherleſs, and Poor*, Zach. 7. 10.

Thus meer *natural* and evil men ſometimes put on the garb of *Mortification*, and exerciſe *rigors* upon their *Bodies* and external perſons, in exchange for the *indulgences* they allow their beloved *appetites*; and while the ſtrict Diſcipline reacheth no further, though we *keep days*, and *Faſt* often, yet this will not put us beyond the condition of the *Phariſee*, who *faſted twice in the week*, as himſelf boaſted, *Luke* 18. 12. And,

(3.) *An imperfect ſtriver may be very much given to pious and religious diſcourſes*: He may love to be talking of Divine things; eſpecially of

the *love* of *Chriſt* to *ſinners*, which he may frequently ſpeak of with much *earneſtneſs* and *affection*, and have that *dear name* always at his tongues end to *begin* and *cloſe* all his ſayings; and to *fill* up the *void* places, when he wants what to ſay next; and yet *this* may be a *bad* man, who never felt thoſe Divine things he talks of; and never *loved Chriſt* heartily as he ought.

'Twas obſerved before, that there are ſome who have a ſort of *Devoutneſs*, and *Religion* in their particular *Complexion*; and if ſuch are *talkative* (as many times they are) they will eaſily run into *ſuch* diſcourſes, as *agree* with their *temper*, and take pleaſure in them for *that* reaſon; As alſo for *this*, becauſe they are apt to gain us reverence, and the good opinion of thoſe with whom we converſe. And ſuch as are by nature diſpoſed for this faculty, may eaſily get it by *imitation* and remembrance of the *devout forms* they hear and read: ſo that there

there may be nothing *Divine* in *all this*; nothing but what may conſiſt with *unmortified* luſts and affections: And though ſuch talk earneſtly of the *love* of *Chriſt*, and expreſs a mighty love to his *name*, yet this may be without any real conformity unto him in his *Life* and *Laws*. The Jews ſpoke much of *Moſes*, in him they *believed*, and in him they *truſted*, John 5. 45. His *name* was a *ſweet* ſound to their ears, and 'twas very *pleaſant* upon their *Tongues*; and yet they *hated* the Spirit of *Moſes*, and had no love to thoſe Laws of his which condemned their wicked actions. And we may ſee how many of thoſe *love Chriſt*, that ſpeak often and affectionately of him, by obſerving how they *keep his Commandments*, John 14. 15. eſpecially *thoſe* of *Meekneſs*, *Mercy*, and *univerſal Love*.

Thus *imperfect Strivers* may imploy themſelves in the *external offices* of *Religion*: I have inſtanced only

in *Three*, the lik may be ſaid of the reſt. And to this, I add,

(IV.) That they may uot only exerciſe themſelves in the *outward* matters of duty, but *may arrive to ſome things that are accounted greater heights, and are really more ſpiritual, and refined.* To inſtance.

(1.) They may have *ſome love* to *God*, *Goodneſs*, and *good Men.* The Soul naturally loves *Beauty* and *Perfection*; and all mankind apprehend *God*, to be of all *Beings*, the moſt *beautiful* and *perfect*; and therefore muſt needs have an *intellectual love* for him: The reaſon that *that love* takes no hold of the *paſſions* in *wicked* men, is, partly becauſe they are *diverted* from the thoughts of Him, by the *objects* of *Senſe*; but chiefly, becauſe they conſider him as their *enemy*, and therefore can have no *complacency* or *delight* in him, who they think hath nothing but thoughts of *enmity*, and diſpleaſure againſt them. But if once they come to be perſwaded

ded (as many times, by ſuch falſe marks, as I have recited, they *are*) that God is their *Father*, and peculiar *Friend*; that *they* are his *choſen*, and his *darlings*, whom he loved from *Eternity*, and to whom he hath given his *Son* and his *Spirit*, and will give *Himſelf*, in a way of the fulleſt enjoyment; Then the *Love* that before was only an *eſteem* in the *underſtanding*, doth *kindle* in the *affections* by the help of the conceit of *Gods loving them ſo dearly*, and the *paſſion* thus heated, runs out, even into *ſeraphick*, and *rapturous Devotions*; while yet all *this*, is but *meer animal love*, excited chiefly, by the *love* of *our ſelves*, not of the *Divine Perfections*. And it commonly goes no further, then to *earneſt* expreſſions of extraordinary love to God in our *Prayers* and *Diſcourſes*, while it appears not in any *ſingular obedience* to his *Laws*, or *generous* and *univerſal love* to mankind: which are the ways whereby the true *Divine Love*

is expreſt: for, *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John.* 5. 3. And as to the *other*, *thus*, *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*, 1 John 4. 12. And on the contrary, *If a man ſay I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar*, John 4. 20. *Charity* then and *univerſal obedience* are the *true* arguments and expreſſions of our love to God; and *theſe* ſuppoſe a *victory* over corrupt *inclinations* and *ſelf-will*. But the other love which ariſeth from the conceit of our *ſpecial dearneſs* to God upon *inſufficient* grounds; *that* goes no further then to ſome *ſuavities*, and *pleaſant fancies* within our ſelves; and ſome *paſſionate* complements of the *Image* we have ſet up in our imaginations. *This* Love will conſiſt with *Hatred* and *contempt* of all that are not like our ſelves; yea, and it will produce it: thoſe poyſonous fruits, and *vile* affections may be incouraged, and cheriſh'd under it. So that

that there may be *ſome love to God* in *evil* men: But while ſelf-love is the *only motive*, and the more *prevalent* paſſion, it ſignifieth nothing to their advantage.

And as the *imperfect ſtriver* may have ſome *love* to *God*, ſo he *may* to *piety* and *vertue*: every man loves theſe in *Idea*. The vileſt ſinner takes part in his *affections* with the *vertuous* and *religious*, when he ſeeth them deſcribed in *Hiſtory* or *Romance*; and hath a deteſtation for *thoſe*, who are character'd as *impious* and *immoral*. *Vertue* is a great *Beauty*, and the mind is taken with it, while 'tis conſider'd at a diſtance; and our corrupt *intereſts*, and ſenſual *affections* are not concern'd. 'Tis *Theſe* that recommend *ſin* to our *love*, and *choice*, while the *mind* ſtands on the ſide of vertue: with *that we ſerve the Law of God*, but with the *fleſh the Law of Sin*, Rom 7. 25. So that moſt *wicked* men, that are not degenerated into meer Brutes, have this

mental and *intellectual* love to *goodneſs*: That is, they *approve*, and *like* it in their *minds*, and would *practiſe* it alſo, were it not for the *prevalent* biaſs of *fleſh* and *ſenſe*.

And hence it will follow likewiſe, That the *ſame* may *approve* and *reſpect good men*; They may reverence and love them for their *Charity*, *Humility*, *Juſtice* and *Temperance*, though themſelves are perſons of the *contrary Character*; yea, they may have a great and ardent affection for thoſe that are eminently *pious* and *devout*, though they are very *irreligious* themſelves. The *conſcience* of *vertue*, and of the *excellency* of *Religion*, may produce this in the meer *natural* man, who is under the *dominion* of *vile inclinations* and *affections*; and therefore, neither is *this* a good *mark of godlineſs*. Our *love* to *God* & *goodneſs* will not ſtead us, except it be *prevalent*. And as the *love* deſcribed, may be *natural*, and a *meer animal* man may arrive unto it: So,

(2.) He

(2.) He may to *an extraordinary zeal for the ſame things that are the objects of his love.* *Hot* tempers are *eager*, where they take either kindneſs or diſpleaſure. The natural man that hath an *animal love* to *Religion*, may be violent in ſpeaking, and acting for things appertaining to *it*. If his temper be *devotional* and paſſionate, he becomes a mighty *zealot*, and fills all places with the *fame* of his *godlineſs*: His natural *fire* moves this way, aud makes a mighty *blaze*. *Ahab* was very *zealous*, &'tis like 'twas not only his own intereſt that made him ſo, 2 *Kings* 10. 16. The *Phariſees* were *zealous* people, and certainly their *zeal* was not always *perſonated*, and put on, but real; though they were Hypocrites, yet they were *ſuch*, as, in many things deceived *themſelves*, as well as *others*. They were *zealous* for their *Traditions*, and they believ'd 'twas their duty to be ſo. St. *Paul* while a *perſecutor*, was *zealous* againſt the *Diſciples*, and he

thought he ought to do many things against that name. And our Saviour foretells, that those *zealous murderers* that should kill his *Saints*, should think, *They did God good service in it*, John 16. 2. So that all the zeal of the natural man is not *feigning*, and acting of a part; nor hath it always *evil* objects. The Pharisees were zealous against the *wickedness* of the *Publicans* and *Sinners*. *Zeal*, and that in *earnest*, and for Religion may be in *bad* men. But then, this is to be noted, that 'tis commonly about *opinions* or *external rites*, and *usages*, and such matters as appertain to *first* Table Duties, while usually the same men are very *cold*, in reference to the *Duties* of the *Second*: And when *Zeal* is *partial*, and spent about the little things that tend not to the overcoming the *difficulties* of our way, or the *perfecting* of *humane nature*, 'tis a meer *animal* fervour, and no *Divine* Fire. And the *natural* man, the

Seeker

Seeker that *ſhall not enter*, may grow up to another height that looks *glorioufly*, and ſeems to ſpeak mighty things. As,

(3.) *He may have great comforts in religious meditations, and that even to rapturous exceſſes.* He may take *theſe*, for *ſweet Communion* with *God*, and the *joys* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *earneſt* of *Glory*, and be lifted up on high by them, and enabled to ſpeak in *wonderful raviſhing ſtrains*; and yet notwithſtanding be an *evil* man, and in the ſtate of ſuch as ſhall be *ſhut out*.

For this we may obſerve, That thoſe whoſe *complexion* inclines them to *devotion*, are commonly much under the power of *melancholy*; and they that are *ſo*, are moſtly very *various* in their tempers; ſometimes *merry*, and *pleaſant* to *exceſs*; and *then* plung'd as deep into the other extream of *ſadneſs* and *dejection*: one while the *ſweet humours* enliven the imagination, and preſent it with all

things

things that are *pleaſant* and *agreeable*; And *then*, the black blood ſucceeds, which begets clouds and darkneſs, and fills the fancy with things *frightful* and *uncomfortable*: And there are very few but feel ſuch varieties, in a degree, in themſelves. Now while the *ſweet Blood* and *Humours* prevail, the perſon whoſe complexion inclines him to Religion, and who hath arrived to the degrees newly diſcours'd of (though a meer *natural* man) is full of inward *delight*, and *ſatisfactions*, and fancies at this turn, that he is much in the *favour* of *God*, and a ſure *Heir* of the *Kingdom* of Glory; which muſt needs excite in him many *luſcious*, and *pleaſant* thoughts: and *theſe* further warm his *imagination*, which, by *new*, and *taking* ſuggeſtions ſtill raiſeth the *affections more*; and ſo the man is as it were *tranſported* beyond himſelf; and ſpeaks like one *dropt* from the *Clouds*: His tongue flows with *Light*, and *Glories*, and *Communion*, and *Revelations*, and *Incomes*;

comes; and then, believes that the *Holy Ghoſt* is the *Author* of all *this*, and that God is *in him of a truth*, in a ſpecial way of *Manifeſtation* and *Vouchſafement*. But when *melancholick* vapours prevail again; the *Imagination* is *overcaſt*, and the *Fancy* poſſeſt by *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* thoughts; and the man, whoſe head was but juſt before among the *Clouds*, is now groveling in the *Duſt*: He thinks *all* is loſt, and his condition miſerable; He is a *caſt-away*, and *undone*; when in the mean while, as to Divine favour he is juſt where he was before, or rather in a *better* ſtate, ſince 'tis *better* to be humbled *with* reaſon, then to be lifted up *without it*. Such effects as *theſe* do meer *natural paſſions* and imaginations produce, when they are tinctured and heightned by *religious melancholly*. To *deny* ones *ſelf*, and to *overcome ones paſſions*, and to *live* in a courſe of a *ſober Vertue*, is much more *Divine* than *all this*.

'Tis *true* indeed, and I am far from

from denying it, that holy men feel thoſe *joys* and *communications* of the *Divine Spirit* which are *no fancies*; and the Scripture calls them *great peace*, Pſal. 119. 165. and *joy in believing*, Rom. 15. 13. and the *peace of God that paſſeth all underſtanding*, Phil. 4. 7. But then, theſe *Divine Vouchſafements* are not *rapturous*, or *ecſtatical*: They are no *ſudden* flaſhes that are gone in a moment, leaving the Soul in the regions of ſorrow, and deſpair; but *ſober laſting* comforts, that are the *rewards* and *reſults* of vertue; the *rejoycings* of a *good conſcience*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. and the *manifeſtations* of God to thoſe rare ſouls, who have overcome the *evils* of their *natures*, and the *difficulties* of the *way*, or are *vigorouſly preſſing* on towards *the mark*, Phil. 3. 14. But for ſuch as have only the *forms* of godlineſs I have mentioned, while the *evil inclinations* and *habits* are indulged, (whatever they may pretend) all the *ſweets* they *talk* of, are but

the.

the *imagery* of *dreams*, and the *pleasant deluſions* of their *fancies*.

THus I have ſhewn how far the *meer animal Religion* may go, in *imperfect ſtriving*: And now I muſt expect to hear,

(1.) That this is very *ſevere*, *uncomfortable* Doctrine; and if one that ſhall eventually be *ſhut out*, may do *all this*, what ſhall become of the *generality* of *Religious* men that never do *ſo much*? And if *all this* be *ſhort*, what will be available? who then ſhall be ſaved?

To which I *Anſwer*, That we are not to make the *meaſures* of *Religion* and *Happineſs* our ſelves; but to take *thoſe* that Chriſt Jeſus hath *made* for us: And he hath told us, That *except our Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 20. Now the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did things in the way of *Religion*, that were

that were equal to all the particulars I have mentioned; yea they went beyond many of our *glorious* Profeſſors, who yet think themſelves in an *high form* of *Godlineſs*. They *believed* their Religion *firmly*, and *Prayed frequently* and *fervently*, and *Faſted ſeverely*; They were *exact*, and exceeding *ſtrict* in the *obſervation* of their *Sabbaths*, and hated *ſcandalous* and *groſs* ſins; and were very *punctual* in all the duties of *outward Worſhip*; and in many things *ſupererrogated* and went beyond what was *commanded*: Such *zealous people* were *They*; and They *ſeparated* from the *converſations* and *cuſtoms* of *other Jews*, upon the account of their ſuppoſed *greater Holineſs* and *Purity*. *Theſe* were *heights* to which the *Phariſees* arrived; and a good Chriſtian muſt *exceed* all *this*: And he that lives in a *ſober courſe* of *Piety* and *Vertue*; of *ſelf Government*, and humble *ſubmiſſion* to God; of *obedience* to his *Superiours*, and *charity* to his *Neighbours*: He doth *really*

exceed

exceed it, and ſhall *enter*, when the other ſhall be *ſhut out*. So that, when our Saviour ſaith, that the *Phariſaick* Righteouſneſs muſt be *exceeded*, the meaning is not, That a greater *degree* of every thing the *Phariſees* did, is *neceſſary*; but we muſt do *that* which in the *nature* and *kind* of it is *better*, and more acceptable to God, *viz.* That whereas they placed their Religion in *ſtrict Faſtings*, an nice obſervations of *Feſtivals*; in *loud* and *earneſt Prayers*, and *zeal* to get *Proſelytes*; we ſhould place *ours*, in *ſincere ſubjections* of our *wills* to the *will* of God; in *imitation* of the life of *Chriſt*, and *obedience* of his Laws; in *amending* the faults of our natures and lives: in *ſubduing* our *Paſſions*, and caſting out the *habits* of *evil*: *Theſe* are much beyond the Religion of the *Phanatick Phariſee*; not in *ſhew* and *pomp*; but in *real* worth, and *divine eſteem*. So that, upon the whole, we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged, becauſe They that do *ſo much*

much are *cast out*; since, though we find not those *heats*, and *specious* things in our selves which we observe in *them*, yet if we are more *meek* and *modest*, and *patient*, and *charitable*, and *humble*, and *just*, our case is *better*; and we have the *Power* of *Godliness*, when theirs is but the *Form*; And *we*, whom They accounted *Aliens* and *Enemies* shall *enter*; while *they*, the presumed *friends* and *domesticks*, shall be *shut out*.

But (2.) I expect it should be again objected against this severity of Discourse, That our Saviour saith, *Mat.* 11. 20. *That his yoke is easie, and his burden is light*: which place seems to cross all that hath been said about the Difficulties of Religion. And 'tis true it hath such an *appearance*, but 'tis *no more*; For the words look as *cross* to the *expressions* of the same Divine Author, concerning the *straightness* of the *Gate*, and *narrowness* of the *Way*, as to any thing I have delivered from those *infallible sayings*.

ſayings. Therefore to remove the *ſemblance* of *contrariety*, which the *objected Text* ſeems to have to thoſe *others*, and to my Diſcourſe, we may obſerve,

That when our Saviour ſaith, that his *yoke* is *eaſie*, the word we read is χρηστὸς, which ſignifieth *very good*, *excellent*, *gracious*; and the meaning I ſuppoſe is, That his Precepts had a *native beauty* and *goodneſs* in them; That they are *congruous* and *ſuitable* to our reaſonable Natures, and *apt* inſtruments to make us *happy*; In which ſenſe, *this* expreſſion hath no *antipathy* to the *Text*, or to any thing I have ſaid. And whereas 'tis added, [*My Burden is light*] I think by this, we are to underſtand, That his *Commands* are not of that *burdenſome* nature, that the *Ceremonies* of the *Jewiſh* Laws were: Thoſe were very cumberſome, and had nothing in their nature to make them *pleaſant* and *agreeable*; whereas his Religion had no *expenſive*, *troubleſome* Rites appenda

pendant to it; nor did it require any thing but our obſervation of thoſe *Laws* which eternal *Reaſon* obligeth us to, and which of our ſelves we ſhould chooſe to live under, were we freed from the *intanglements* of the *World*, and *intereſts* of *Fleſh*. So that neither doth this *Objection* ſignifie any thing againſt the ſcope of my Diſcourſe.

AND now I deſcend to the *Improvement* of what I have ſaid; and the things I have to add will be comprehended under theſe two Generals (1.) *Inferences*, and (2.) plain *Advice* in order to practiſe. I begin with the *Inferences* and *Corollaries* that ariſe from the whole Diſcourſe. And,

(1.) We may collect, *What is the ſtate of Nature*; and *What the ſtate of Grace*. We have ſeen that 'tis the *great* buſineſs of *Religion* to *overcome evil Inclinations*, and the prevailing *influence* of *ſenſe* and *paſſion*, and *evil*

cuſtoms

cuſtoms and *example* and worldly *affections*; And therefore the *ſtate* of *Nature* conſiſts in the *power* and *prevalency* of *Theſe*. *This* is that the Scripture calls the *Old man*, Eph. 4.22. The *Image of the earthy*, 1 Cor. 15. *Fleſh*, Gal. 5. 17. *Death*, Rom. 7.24. *Darkneſs*, Joh. 3. 19. *and old leven*, 1 Cor 5. 7. On the contrary, *The ſtate of Grace* is a ſtate of *ſincere ſtriving* againſt them; which if it keeps on, ends in *Victory*. And this is call'd *Converſion*, Acts 3. 19. and *Renovation*, while 'tis in its firſt motions; And the *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. the *Image* of the *Heavenly*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. The *Spirit*, Gal. 5. 16. *Light*, Epheſ. 5. 8. and *Life*, 1 Joh. 3. 14. when 'tis arriv'd to more *compleatneſs* and *perfection*.

For our fuller underſtanding this, we may conſider, That Grace is taken (1.) for *Divine favour*; (2.) for *Chriſtian Vertue*. As it ſignifies *Divine favour*, ſo it is uſed,

(1.) For thoſe *helps* and *aids* God affords

affords us, *viz.* the *Goſpel*, Joh. 1. 17. and the *influences* of *his Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 9. In this ſenſe we are deliver'd from the *ſtate* of *Nature* by *Baptiſm*, *viz.* We are intituled to *divine helps*, which is a kind of *regeneration*; for we are born in a condition of *impotence*, and *weakneſs*, and *deſtitution* of *ſpiritual aſſiſtances*; This is the *world* of *meer nature*; But then in *Baptiſm*, we are brought into the *world* of *the Spirit*, that is, are put under its *influences*, and are aſſured of its *aids*, and ſo are *morally born again*; Not that this *Regeneration* alone will *ſave* us, without our endeavours; it imports only an *external relation*, and right to *priviledges*, and by *theſe* we may be powerfully *aſſiſted* in our *ſtriving*, if we uſe them.

But then (2.) *Grace*, as it ſignifies *divine favour*, implies his *ſpecial* love and kindneſs, ſuch as he vouchſafes to holy and vertuous men; ſo that we may obſerve that there may be a *diſtinction* between a *ſtate* of *Grace*, and

and a *ſtate* of *ſalvation.* A ſtate of *Grace,* in the former ſenſe, is a *condition aſſiſted* by the *influences* of *Gods Spirit,* and all *baptized* perſons are in *that.* But if they *uſe* not thoſe *helps,* they are not in Gods *ſpecial* favour; and ſo not in a *ſtate* of *Salvation.* But when thoſe *aſſiſtances* are duly imployed, and join'd with our *ſincere endeavour,* then the perſon ſo uſing them, is in a *ſtate* of *Salvation* alſo; and in God's ſpecial love and favour. Thus of the *ſtate* of *Grace* in the *firſt* ſenſe, as taken for *divine favour.*

(2.) The word is alſo uſed for *Chriſtian Vertue,* 2 Pet. 3. 18. and *Vertue* is call'd *Grace,* becauſe 'tis wrought in us by the *aſſiſtance* of Gods *Spirit* and the *light* of the *Goſpel,* which are *divine* favours; and to be in a *ſtate* of *grace* in *this* ſenſe, is to be a *virtuous* man, which ſuppoſeth *divine* aids, and intitles to *divine love.*

Theſe things I have taken an occaſion

caſion thus briefly to ſtate; becauſe there is oft-times much confuſion in mens diſcourſes about *Grace* and *Nature*, from which much trouble and many controverſies have ariſen. And by what I have ſaid alſo in theſe brief hints, the doctrine of our Church in the office of *Baptiſm*, may be underſtood clearly, and will appear to be very *ſound* and *true*, notwithſtanding the *petty* exceptions of confident Diſſenters.

(II.) I may infer, *That the great Deſign of Religion and the Goſpel is to perfect humane nature.* The *perfection* of our *natures*, conſiſts, in the *ſubjection* and *ſubordination* of the *affections* and *paſſions* to the *Mind*, as it is enlightned, and directed by the *divine Laws*, and thoſe of *Reaſon*. This is the ſtate of *integrity*, in which we were *firſt* made; and we loſt it by the rebellion of our *ſenſes* and inferiour powers, which have uſurpt the *government* of us ever ſince. Here is

is the *imperfection*, and *corruption* of our *natures*.

Now Religion deſigns to *remove* and *cure theſe*; and to reſtore us to our firſt, and happy ſtate. Its buſineſs is not to reform our looks, and our language; or to model our actions, and geſtures into a devout appearance; not only to reſtrain the practice of open prophaneſs and villany; nor to comfort us with the aſſurance of Gods loving us we know not why: But to *cure* our *ill natures*, to *govern* our *paſſions*, to *moderate* our *deſires*, to throw out *pride* and *envy*, and all *uncharitable* ſurmiſals, with the other *ſpiritual* ſorts of wickedneſs; and thereby to make us *like* unto God, in whom there is no ſhadow of *ſin*, or *imperfection*; and ſo to render us fit objects of his *delight*, and *love*.

So that whatever doth not tend to the making us, ſome way or other *really better*: *better* in our *ſelves*, and better in all *Relations*, as *fathers*, and children, and *husbands* and *wives*, and

subjects, and *governours*, and *neighbours*, and *friends*, is not Religion; It may be a *form* of *Godliness*, but 'tis nothing to the *life*, and *power*. And where we see not *this effect* of Religion, let the professor of it be never so *high* and *glorious* in his profession, we may yet conclude that either his *Religion* is not *good*, or that he only *pretends*, and *really* hath it not.

This I take to be a consideration of great moment and great certainty, *viz.* That Christian Religion aims at the *bettering* and *perfecting* of our natures. For the things it commands relate either to *worship* or *virtue*. The instances of *external* worship are *prayer*, and *praise*; both which are high acts of *gratitude* and *justice*, and they fit us for divine blessings, and keep us under a *sense* of God, and prepare us for *union* with him, which is the *highest perfection* of which the creature is capable. Thus the *outward* acts of *worship* tend to our happiness; and the *inward* do infinitely the *same*.

These

These are, *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Fear*. *Faith* in God supports and relieves us in all afflictions, and distresses. The *love* of him is a pleasure and solace to us in all losses and disappointments, since he is an object most filling, and satisfying; and *one* that cannot be lost, except we wilfully thrust him from us. *Fear* of God hath no *torment*; 'Tis no *slavish* dread of his *greatness* and Power; but a *reverence* of his *perfections*, and a *lothness* to offend him; and this *disposeth* us also for the *communications* of his grace, and love, *Ps.* 85.9. And this it doth by *congruity*, and its *own nature*; which is to be said likewise of the others. So that they would make those *happy* that practise them, whether they had been positively enjoyn'd, or not; And though no *express* rewards had been annext unto them.

There are other two acts of worship which Christianity requires, which are *instituted* and *positive*, & respect Christ our Lord; They are, the *Sacraments*,

Baptism, and the *Lords Supper*; both which are *holy Rites* of high signification; and *seals* of an excellent *Covenant* between God and us, assuring us of pardon of sins, and all divine *favours*, upon the conditions of our *Faith*. and *repentance*; and more firmly obliging us to holy *obedience*, and *dependance*; The only *way* in which we can be happy. Whence we see briefly, that all the parts of *worship* which Christianity binds upon us, tend to our *perfection* and *Felicity*.

And all the *vertues* that it commands do the same; both those that respect us in a personal capacity, and those others that relate to us as *members* of *Societies*. Thus *humility*, recommended *Mat.* 5. 3. *Meekness* blest, ver. 5. purity, ver 8. are vertues that accomplish our *particular* persons, and make us *happy* in our selves. For of *Pride cometh Contention*, Prov. 13. 10. And a great part of our troubles arise from stomach and self-will; which humility cures. *Meekness* also takes away the occasion of

of the numerous miſchiefs we run into through the *rage* and diſorder of our paſſions; and 'tis in it ſelfe a *great beauty* and ornament, ſince it ariſeth from the *due order*, and *goverment* of our *faculties*. *Purity* which comprehends *temperance* of all ſorts, frees us from the tormenting *importunity* of thoſe deſires that drag us out of our ſelves, and expoſe us to ſin, and folly, and temptation, and make us exceeding miſerable; beſides which it is a perfection that renders us *like* unto God, and the bleſt *Spirits* of the higheſt rank. And Chriſtian vertues do not only accompliſh, and make us happy in our *particular* perſons, but they do the ſame in our *publique* capacities, the more *publick* capacity alſo; They diſpoſe us to a *quiet* obedience to our *governours* without *murmuring*, and complaining; and thereby the publique *peace* is ſecured; and all good things elſe in *that*.

But there are *other vertues* that Chriſtianity enjoyns, which have a

more direct tendency to the happiness of others, as *Justice*, Mat 7. 12. *Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. *Loyalty*. Rom. 13. and *all* other *publique* vertues may, I think, be comprehended under *these*. Where there is no *Justice*, every man preys upon another, and no mans property is safe. Where *Charity* is wanting, Jealousies, hatreds, envying, back-bitings, and cruelties abound, which render the world deplorably unhappy. Where there is not *Loyalty* and *conscionable submission* to Governours, the *publick* is upon every occasion of commotion, involv'd in infinite miseries, and disasters. So that all the *precepts* of our *Religion* are in their own nature *proper instruments* to make *us happy*; and they had been *methods* of *Felicity* to be chosen by all reasonable creatures, though they had never been required by so great, and so sacred an Authority.

These things I have said, because I could not choose but take this occasion to recommend the *excellency*, and

reaſonableneſs of our Religion; And I have done it but only in brief hints, becauſe it ariſeth but upon a *Corollary* from my main ſubject, and from *this* I infer further.

(III.) *That Chriſtianity is the height, and perfection of morality.* They both tend to the real bettering, and accompliſhment of humane nature: But the *rules* and *meaſures* of *moral Philoſophy* were weak and imperfect till *Chriſt Jeſus* came; *He confirmed* and *enforced* all thoſe *precepts* of vertue, that were written upon our hearts; and *cleared* them from many *corruptions* that were grown upon them, through ignorance and vice, the *gloſſes* of the *Jews*, and *falſe* conceits of the *Gentiles*; and he inforced them anew by his *Authority* and the knowledge he gave of *divine aids*, and greater *rewards*, and *puniſhments*, than were underſtood before; yea he *enlarged* them in ſome inſtances; ſuch as, *loving enemies* and *forgiving injuries*. Thus *Chriſt Jeſus* taught

morality, *viz.* the *way of living like men*; And the 5. Chapture of *Mathew* is an excellent *Lecture* of *this* kind.

So that to disparage *morality*, is to *disgrace Christianity* it self; and to vilifie *one* of the ends of Christs coming into the world. For all *Religion* and all *duties* respect either *God*, our *neighbour*, or *our selves*; & the duties that relate to these *two last*, are acknowledg'd *moral vertues*. The Apostle St. *James* counted *these Moralities* of *visiting* the *Widow* and *Fatherless*, to be the *pure Religion* and undefiled. Jam. 1. 17. And the prophet *Micah* intimates, that those *moral* vertues of *Justice* and *mercy* were some of the main things that God required of us *Micah* 6. 8. Our Saviour saith that the whole *Law* is summ'd up in *these* two, to *love* God with *all* our souls, and our *neighbour* as our *selves*, Math. 22. 13 which *latter* contains the duties of *morality*. And that which the *grace* of God in the Gospel *teacheth*, according to St. *Paul* is, to *live soberly*, *righteously*,

ly, and godly in this preſent world, Tit. 2. 11, There is no *godlineſs* without *morality*. All the *fruits* of the *Spirit* reckon'd up *Gal.* 5. 22. are *moral vertues*. And when we are commanded to *grow in grace*, 2 *Pet*, 3. 18. *vertue* is partly underſtood. For one branch of what is call'd *Grace* in us, is *moral* vertue, produced by *divine* aids, *Chriſtian* principles, and incouragements; though 'tis true, the word is extended to thoſe duties that relate immediately to God alſo.

By which we ſee how *ignorantly*, and *dangerouſly* thoſe people talk, that diſparage *morality* as a dull, lame thing of no account, or reckoning. Upon this the *Religion* of the ſecond Table is by too many neglected; and the whole *myſtery* of the *new Godlineſs* is lay'd in *frequent hearing*, and devout *ſeraphick talk*, *luſcious phancies*, *new lights*, *incomes*, *manifeſtations*, *ſealings*, *in-dwellings*, and ſuch like. Thus *Antinomianiſm*, and all kinds of *Phanaticiſm* have made their way by the

diſparagement of *morality*, and men have learnt to believe themſelves the *choſen*, *pretious* people, while their *hearts* have been full of *malice*, and *bitterneſs*, and their hands of *violence*, while they *deſpiſed dominions*, and *ſpake evil of dignities*, *rebel'd* againſt the *Goverment*, deſtroyed *publique* peace, and endeavoured to bring *all* into *miſery* and *confuſions*. 'Tis this diabolical project of dividing *morality* from *Religion* that hath given riſe and occaſion to all *theſe villanies*. And while the Practiſers of ſuch things have aſſumed the name of the *only Godly*, *Godlyneſs* it ſelf hath been brought into *diſgrace* by them; and *Atheiſm* incouraged to ſhew it ſelf, in open *defiance* to *Religion*, Yea, through the *indiſcretions*, and inconſiderateneſs of *ſome preachers*, the *phantaſtry*, and vain babble of *others*, and the general *diſpoſition* of the people to *admire* what makes a great *ſhew*, and pretends to more than ordinary *ſpirituality*; things are, in many places, come to

that

that paſs, that thoſe who teach *Chriſtian vertue* & Religion, in *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity* without ſenſleſs *phraſes*, and fantaſtick *affectations*, ſhall be reckon'd for *dry moraliſts*, and ſuch as underſtand nothing of the *life*, and *power* of *Godlineſs*. Yea, thoſe people have been ſo long uſed to *gibberiſh* and *canting*, that they cannot underſtand *plain ſenſe*; and *vertue* is become ſuch a ſtranger to their *ears*, that when they hear it ſpoken of in a pulpit, they count the *preacher* a broacher of *new divinity*; and one that would teach the *way to heaven* by *Philoſophy*: And he eſcapes well, if they do not ſay, That he is an *Atheiſt*; or that he would reconcile us to *Gentiliſm*, and *Heathen Worſhip*. The danger and vanity of which *ignorant* humour, the *contempt* of *morality*, is apparent in the whole ſcope of my Diſcourſe, and therefore I add no more concerning it here; but proceed to another Inference, which is.

(IV.) That

(IV.) *That Grace and the new nature, make their way by degrees on the Soul*; for the *difficulties* will not be *removed* nor the corrupt *nature* ſubdued all at once. *Habits* that grow by *repeated* acts, time, and continuance, will not be *expelled* in a *moment*. No man can become greatly *evil or good*, on a *ſudden*. *The Path of the juſt ſhines more and more to to a perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18, We do not jump from *darkneſs* into *full light*, We are not fully ſanctified and converted in an inſtant. The *day* begins in an *inſenſible* dawn, and the *Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of Muſtard ſeed*, Mat. 13. 31. It doth not *ſtart* up preſently to the *ſtature* of a *tree*. The *Divine* birth begins like the *Natural*, in an imperfect *embryo*.

There are ſome *ſeeds* of *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs* that God hath ſown in our natures; *theſe* are excited by the Divine Grace and Spirit to *convictions*, which proceed to *purpoſes*; *theſe* to *reſolutions*, and thence we paſs to *abſtinence* from all *groſs ſins*, and the

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performance of *outward Duties*; and ſo at laſt by degrees, to *vigorous attempts*, for the *deſtruction* of *evil habits* and *inclinations*. When *Grace* is arrived to *this* eminent growth, 'tis very viſible, as the Plant is when 'tis above the ground: But the *beginnings* of *Converſion* are not ordinarily *perceived*.

So that to catechize men about the *punctual time*, and *circumſtances* of their *Converſion*, is an *idle* device, and a great temptation to *vanity* and *lying*. Who can tell the exact moment when the *night ends*, and the dawn enters? 'Tis true indeed, the *paſſage* from *the exceſſes* of Wickedneſs, which begins in ſome extraordinary horrors and convictions, is ſometimes very notable; but 'tis not ſo in *all*, or *moſt*. The time of St. *Paul's* converſion was eminent, but that change was from *great contrarieties* and *miraculous*, and therefore 'tis not to be drawn into inſtance. Both the *beginnings* and *minute* progreſſions of Grace, are uſually undiſcerned: We

cannot

cannot ſee the *Graſs* juſt putting out of the earth, or actually growing; but yet we find that it doth both. And *Grace* is better known in its *fruits*, than in its *riſe*. By their *Fruits ye ſhall know them*, ſaith our Saviour, Mat. 12. 33. and the *ſame* way we may know our ſelves.

(V.) *We ſee that there is an Animal, as well as a Divine Religion*: A Religion that is but the *effect* and *modification* of *complexion*, *natural fear* and *ſelf-love*. How far *theſe* will go, we have ſeen, and how ſhort it will prove in the end. The not noting *this* hath been the ſad occaſion of deceiving many. Some obſerving great *heats* of *zeal* and *devotion* in the *modern Phariſees*, take theſe to be the *Saints* and *good people*; believing all the *glorious* things which they aſſume to themſelves: When *others*, that know them to be *envious* and *malitious*, *unjuſt*, and *covetous*, *proud* and *ungovernable*, and cannot therefore look on them

as

as ſuch *choice holy* people, are apt to affirm all to be *hypocriſie* and *feigning*. In which ſentences, *both* are miſtaken for want of knowing that there is a *meer Animal Religion*, that will produce very *ſpecious* and *glorious* effects; So that though the *Phariſee* Prays vehemently, and Faſts ſeverely, and talks much of the love of God, and delights greatly in hearing, and pious Diſcourſe, and will ſuffer all things for what he calls his Conſcience; yet he is not to be concluded a Saint from *hence*, becauſe the *meer Animal* Religion may put it ſelf forth in all *theſe expreſſions*.

And though *this Profeſſor* be a *bad* man, *proud* and *covetous*, *malicious* and *cenſorious*, *Sacrilegious* and *Rebellious*, yet we cannot thence be aſſured that he is an *Hypocrite*, in one ſenſe, *viz.* ſuch an one as *feigns all that he pretends*: But we may believe that he is really ſo affected with *Hearing* and *Praying*, and devout *Company*, as he makes ſhew, and yet for all

all *this*, not alter our opinion of his being an *evil man*: ſince the *Animal* Religion will go as far as the things in which he glories.

There is nothing whereby the common people are drawn more eaſily into the wayes of *Sects* and *Separations*, than by the obſervation of the *zeal* and *devotion* of *thoſe* of the *factions*: *Theſe* they take to be *Religion*, and the great matters of *Godlineſs*, and *thoſe* the *religious* and *only godly* people. And ſo firſt they conceive a great opinion of them, and then follow them whitherſoever they lead. For the generality of men are tempted into *Schiſm* and *Parties*, not ſo much by the *arguments* of *diſſenters*, as by the *opinion* of their *Godlineſs*, which opinion is grounded upon things which may ariſe from the *meer Animal Religion*, and very commonly do ſo. This they underſtand not, and by *this ignorance* are betrayed into the ſnare of *Separation*, to the diſturbance of the *Peace* of the *Church*, and

and their *own great hurt* and *inconvenience.* Whereas could they be made to know and conſider, that *complexion* and *natural* paſſions may bring forth *all theſe fruits*, they might be ſecured by this means againſt the *tempting* impoſture; and learn that *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, *Affability* and *Charity*, *Juſtice*, and a *Peaceable*, *humble temper*, are better arguments of *Saintſhip* than all *theſe.* Thus a great *miſchief* might be prevented; and there is *another* that might be remedied by the *ſame* Obſervation: The inconvenience is this,

While the enemies of Factions object *Hypocriſie* to them, affirming that all they *do* and *ſay*, is meer *perſonating* and *pretence*; they confirm and ſettle thoſe people in their way; for many of them *know*, that they are in *earneſt*, and conſequently, that their oppoſers are miſtaken in their judgments concerning them; by which they are better eſtabliſht in their own good opinion, and hardned againſt convi-

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ction; whereas, did they conſider ſuch things as I have ſuggeſted, about the *Animal Religion*, and grant to them that they may be *ſerious*, believe themſelves infinitely, and feel all thoſe Warmths, which they pretend, and yet be *evil men*, and far enough from being *Godly*; Did they ſhew them, that all their *zeal* and *Devotion*, and more and greater than *theirs*, may ariſe from a principle that hath nothing *Divine* and *ſupernatural* in it: They would thereby ſtrike them in the *right vein*, and bring them down from the high perch, whereon, by their *falſe marks*, they had placed themſelves; and thereby diſabuſe them, and prevent the abuſe of others.

(VI.) *We ſee how we may know our ſtate, whether it be that of Grace and Life; or the other ſad one of Unregeneracy and Death.* The *ſtate* of *Grace* is a *motion towards the recovery of the Divine Image, and a perfect victory over our ſelves, and all corrupt inclinations*

and

and affections, The ſtate of *Unregeneracy* and *Death*, is the *continuance under the power and prevalency of ſenſe, paſſion, and evil habits*. Now when 'tis queſtion'd by our ſelves in which of *theſe* ſtates we are; it muſt be ſuppoſed that we are arrived at *ſomething* of Religion: For the groſly wicked cannot but know what their condition is. And the way I would propoſe to thoſe others, who are yet *uncertain*, is this, *viz.* To take notice,

Whether they really deſign, and make any progreſs in Goodneſs. Every motion indeed cannot be *felt* or *perceived*; but if we go on, though never ſo inſenſibly, time will ſhew that we are grown. If we *conſider* what are our *particular defects*, and ſtudiouſly apply *proper* inſtruments to remove them: if we find ſucceſs in thoſe indeavours, and that we are *better* this year than we were the former; That our *Paſſions* are *better* governed, and our *inordinate affections* more *reſtrained*, and our *evil habits* and *inclinations*

ons less powerful with us, 'tis an *infallible sign*, that we *live* and are in a *state* of *Grace*; that we shall at last arrive *to a perfect man in Christ Jesus*, Eph. 4. 13. and shall *attain if we faint not*, 2 Cor. 4. 1. whereas on the other hand, if we come to some *hopeful* pitch, and *stand still* there; if *sin* and *temptation* be as *powerful* with us *now*, as *they* were a year ago, and our *inclinations* and *passions* just at the same pass; we are in a *bad* state, and *dead*. While the Plant *grows*, it *lives*, and may become a *great tree*, though at present it be but *small*: whereas *that* whose stature is *bigger*, and more *promising*, if it *proceeds* not, *decayes* and comes to nothing.

Though we are *imperfect*, if we are *striving* and going *towards* perfection, God overlooks our *Infirmities*, and *pardons* them for Christ's sake. This is our *sincerity*, and an *effect* of *true Faith*. But if on the other hand, we think our selves *well*, and do not always attempt *forwards*, our *state* is *bad*,

bad, and our *ſins* will be *imputed*: Be our pretences what they will, our *Faith* is not *ſincere*, and will not ſtead us.

When we get to a certain *pitch* in *Religion*, and make *that* our *ſtate*, 'tis an argument that our *Religion* was *meerly Animal*; and but a *mode* of *complexion*, *ſelf-love*, and *natural fear*. When we overcome *ſome* ſins, and are willing to ſpare and cheriſh *others*, 'tis a ſign that we are not *ſincere* in our attempts upon *any*, and that what we have done, was not performed upon *good* and *divine* motives.

Sincerty is diſcovered by growth, and this is the ſureſt *mark* that I know of *Tryal*, So that we have no reaſon to *preſume*, though, as we think, we have gone a *great way*, if we *go not on*. Nor on the other ſide, have we any to *diſpair*, though our preſent *attainments* are but *ſmall*, if we are *proceeding*. The buds and tendereſt bloſſoms of Divine *Grace*, are acceptable to God; when the *faireſt leaves* of the

meer,

meer Animal Religion are *nothing* in his eſteem.

This is a great advantage we have from the Goſpel, that *imperfection* will be accepted, where there is *ſincerity*; whereas according to the meaſures of exact and rigorous Juſtice, no man could be made happy in the high degree of glory, but *he* that was *perfect*, and whoſe *victories* were abſolute.

(VII.) It may be collected from our Diſcourſe, *Wherein* the *Power of Godlineſs* conſiſts, viz. *In a progreſs towards perfection, and an intire victory over all the evils of our Natures.* The *Forms* of *Godlineſs* are not only in the *ceremonies* of *Worſhip*, and external actions of *feigned* Piety; But all the *fine* things of the *Animal* Religion are of *this kind*; and they are the *worſt* ſort: By the *groſſer Forms* men hardly deceive *others*; by *theſe* they effectually *gull themſelves.* So that many that vehemently *oppoſe Forms*, are the greateſt *Formaliſts. Forms* of

of Worſhip may well agree with the *Power* of *Godlineſs*; whenas *zeal* againſt *Forms*, may be a *Form* it ſelf; whatever makes *ſhew* of *Religion*, and doth not make us *better*, that's a *Form*, at leaſt to *us*. There are *Spiritual Forms*, as well as thoſe of the other ſort, and *theſe* are moſt *deadly*. *Poyſon* is worſt in *Aqua Vitæ*. He that ſpeaks his Prayers *ex tempore* with *vehemence* and *lowdneſs*, if he ſtrive not againſt his *ill nature* and *ſelf-will*, is as much a *Formaliſt*, as *he* that tells his *Prayers* by his *Beads*, and underſtands not one word he ſaith. And thoſe that run away from *Forms* in *Churches*, meet more dangerous *ones* in *Barns* and *private corners*. *Orthodox Opinions*, *devout Phraſes*, *ſet Looks*, *melting Tones*, *affected Sighs*, and *vehement Raptures*, are often meer *Forms* of *Godlineſs*, that proceed from the *Animal* Religion, which it ſelf is a *Form* likewiſe. O that the obſervers of ſo many *motes* in their Brethrens *eyes*, would learn

to

to throw out the *Beames* of their own!

The Form of Godlineſs that pretends it ſelf to be *no more*, is not ſo *hurtful*: But the *Formes*, that call themſelves the *Power*, are *deadly*. 'Tis the *Formality* and *Superſtition* of *Separatiſts* that keeps on the *Separation*: *They* contend for *phancies* and *arbitrary* trifles; *We* for *order* and *obedience*. The people are abuſed by *names*, and being frighted by the *ſhadows* of *Superſtition* and *Formality*, they run into the worſt *Formality*, and ſillieſt *Superſtition* in the World. *The Kingdom of Heaven conſiſts not in meats and drinks*, Rom. 14. 17. neither in *Circumciſion*, nor *Uncircumciſion*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. not in *zeal for* little things, nor in *zeal againſt* them; both the one and the other are equally *formal*.

The *power* of Religion lies in *uſing* Divine *aids heartily* and *conſtantly*, in order to the overcoming the *Difficulties* of our *way*. This *Godlineſs* is not exerciſed ſo much in *reforming others*,

others, as *our ſelves*: The chief deſign is to govern *within*, and not to make Laws for the *World without us*, This is that *Wiſdom* that is from *above*, which is *pure* and *peaceable*. Jam. 3. 17. It makes no *noiſe* and bluſter abroad, but quietly minds its own buſineſs at home.

So that certainly the *beſt* men have not always had the greateſt *fame* for *Godlineſs*; as the *wiſeſt* have very ſeldom been the moſt *popular*. They are the *effects* of the *Animal Religion* that make the *biggeſt ſhew*. The voice of true Religion is *heard in quiet*, it ſounds not in the corners of the ſtreet. The *power* of *Godlineſs* is ſeen in *Juſtice*, *Meekneſs* *Humility*, and *Charity*, things that look not ſo ſplendidly as the *Spiritual Forms*.

And thus of the *Inferences* and *Corollaries* that may be drawn from my Diſcourſe, which though they cannot all be inferred from any of its minute and ſeperated parts, yet they lie in

the deſign and contexture of the whole.

I Come now to the *Advice* for *Practice*. The way of Happineſs is *difficult*, but the *difficulties* may be overcome by *ſtriving*. A *little* will *not do*; *many ſeekers are ſhut out*; what remains then, but that we perſwade our ſelves to *ſtrive*, and that *diligently*; with *conſtant reſolution* and *endeavour*?

We were made for Happineſs, and Happineſs all the World ſeeks: *Who will ſhew us any good?* Pſal. 4. 6. is the voice of all the Creatures. We have *ſought* it long in emptineſs, and *ſhadows*; and that ſearch hath ſtill ended in ſhame and diſappointment. Where *true ſubſtantial Felicity* is we know, and the *Way we know*, Joh. 14. 4. It is not hid from us in *Clouds* and *thick Darkneſs*; or if it were, 'twere worth our pains to ſearch after it. It is not at ſo great a *diſtance*, but it may be ſeen, yea, it may be brought ſo neer as to be felt. Though the

the *way* is *ſtreight*, yet 'tis *certain*; or if it were otherwiſe, who would not venture his pains upon the *poſſibility* of ſuch an *iſſue? Many Difficulties* are in it; but our *Encouragements* and *Aſſiſtances* are *infinite.* The *love* of *God*, and the *gift* of his *ſon*; the *blood* of *Chriſt*, and his *interceſſion*; the *aids* of the *Spirit*, and the *directions* of the *Goſpel*; the *Invitations* and *Promiſes*, the rare *Precepts*, and incomparable *Examples* of thoſe holy men that have gone before us: Theſe are mighty *helpes* and great *motives* to aſſiſt us in *ſtriving*, and to quicken us to it.

Let us then ariſe in the ſtrength of *Faith*, and in the encouragement of *thoſe aids*, and attempt with courage upon the *Difficulties* of our way. Let us ingage our *deepeſt Reſolutions*, and moſt *diligent endeavours.* Here is no need to *deliberate*, the things are *neceſſary*, the *benefits unſpeakable*, and the *event* will be *glorious.* It is no Queſtion, I hope, *whether God, or the Creature is to be firſt choſen*; *whether*

ther Heaven or Hell be better? and therefore there is no cauſe that we ſhould *ſtay* and *conſider*; we cannot be *raſh here*, we cannot *hurt* our ſelves by a too *ſudden ingagement*; we have delayed *too long* already, and every *moment* we ſit ſtill, is *one* loſt to our *Duty*, and our *Happineſs*. Let us reſolve then, and *begin* with *courage*, and *proceed* with *diligence*, 'tis our *End* and *Felicity* for which we are to ſtrive; and every thing is *active* for its End and Perfection.

All *Creatures* are *diligent* in ſerving the Deſigns of Providence; the *Heavens* are in reſtleſs *motion*, and the *Clouds* are ſtill carrying about their *fruitful Waters*; the *ſluggiſh Earth* it ſelf is always putting forth in variety of *Trees*, and *Graſs*, and *Flowers*; the *Rivers* run towards the Sea, the *Brooks* move towards *them*, and the *Sea* within it ſelf. Thus all things even in *inanimate* Nature may mind us of acting towards our end. And if we look a little higher, the

Beaſts

Beaſts of the Field, the *Fowls*, and *Cattel*, and *creeping* things are diligent in *ſtriving* after the *good* and *perfection* of their Natures, and *Solomon* ſends the Sluggard to thoſe little *Inſects*, the *Ant* and *Bee*, to teach him activity and diligence, *Prov. 6.6.* And ſhall the *Beaſts* act more *reaſonably* than the profeſſed Sons of *Reaſon?* May it not ſhame *us*, that we need *Inſtruction* from the Creatures that have no *underſtanding?* With what face can we carry our heads ſo high, and look down with contempt upon inferiour Animals, when *they* live more *wiſely* and more *regularly* than we?

The Sum is, *All things* are inceſſantly *moving towards an End*; and Happineſs is *ours*, which therefore ſhould ingage our moſt careful Thoughts, and moſt active Endeavours

We are ſollicitous and diligent about things of infinitely *leſs* moment, and in effect of *none*, viz. *un-*

certain Riches, *ſenſual* Pleaſures, and *worldly* Honours; though the way to *theſe* is ſufficiently *difficult* and *uneaſie*, yet we are not *diſcouraged*; we attempt all thoſe *Difficulties* with an *obſtinate* Courage, though without promiſe of any *equal* aſſiſtance, or aſſurance of ſucceſs. We are often *defeated* in our purſuits, and yet we *go on*. We are *overmaſter'd* by *croſs* events, and yet we *try again*. We *miſs* our *happineſs*, when we have attain'd our *end*, and yet we are as *active* in courting diſappointment another time; either we attain not the *things* we ſeek, or find no *true ſatisfaction* in *them*, or they *die* in our hands *preſently*, and yet we *ſtrive*. And doth not this *activity* about *uncertain*, *unſatisfying Trifles*, ſhamefully reprove our Negligence in reference to our *great End*, *Happineſs* and *Perfection?* In ſtriving for which we have all the *powers* of *Heaven* to *aid* us, and the *Word* of God, and the *Blood* of his Son, and the *experience* of all that ever try'd, to

aſſure

aſſure us that we ſhall neither fail of the *things* we *ſeek*, nor of the *pleaſure* that we *expect* from them. And why then do we *lazily* ſit down, and with the Sluggard ſay, *There is a Lion in the way*, while we deſpiſe greater diſcouragements, when vain things are to be ſought? The Merchant doth not give off, becauſe there are Storms, and the numerous Dangers of the Deep to be met with in his way to the *Indies*; nor the Souldier lay by his Arms, becauſe of the hazards and toils of War. And do we act *courageouſly* for *petty purchaſes*; and faint and deſpond when we are to *ſtrive* for *Crowns* and *eternal* Glories?

'Tis true indeed our own *natural* ſtrength is *ſmall*, in proportion to the *Difficulties* we are to encounter; but the *Grace of God is ſufficient for us*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. and we may do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us, *Phil.* 4. 13. Nature is *weak*, and *imperfect*, but we are not left in the condition of *meer nature*: *For we are not*

under the Law but under Grace, Rom. 6. 14. We are under the *influences* of the *holy Spirit*, which will remove the *mountains*, and plain the way before us, if we take care to engage thoſe aids by *Faith* and *ſincere* endeavour.

For this we may be ſure of, that *God will never be wanting to us*, if we are not *ſo* unto our *ſelves*. So that the caſe as to our *natural inability*, and the *aſſiſtance* of Gods *Spirit*, ſeems to be thus. A man in a Boat is carried from the Harbour he deſigns, by the violence of the Current; he is not able only by plying the Oar, to overcome the reſiſtance of the Tide; but a gentle Gale blows with him, which will not of it ſelf carry him up againſt the Torrent: *Neither* of them will do it *ſingle*: But if he *hoiſt* the *ſail*, and uſe the Oar too, this *united* force prevails; and he gets happily to the Harbour. This methinks reſembles our Condition; we are carried down the Torrent of *evil inclinations*

and

and *Affections*, our own *unaided* powers are too *little* for that *great* force: but the *Holy Spirit* is with us, It breaths upon us, and is ready to aſſiſt, if we are *ſo* to uſe it, and by the ſuperaddition and ingagement of thoſe bleſſed Aids, there is no evil in our natures but may be overcome. So that we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged at the apprehenſion of our *impotence*, *out of weakneſs we ſhall be made ſtrong* Heb. 11. 24. If we imploy our *Talent*, though it be but a very *ſmall* one, we ſhall have more, Mat. 25. 29. And if we *accept* of thoſe divine helps, and *uſe* them, what was before, to meer *natural* conſideration, *uneaſie*, will be pleaſant and ſweetly reliſhing.

One of the greateſt *Difficulties* in the way of Religion, is to begin: the *firſt* ſteps are *roughest* to thoſe feet that have been unaccuſtomed to it. The helps and manifold incouragements we ſhall meet with in the *Progreſs*, will render it more *agreeable*

able and *delightſome.* Thoſe very *toils* will be *grateful*; there is ſcarce any great *ſenſe* of *pleaſure*, but where there is ſome *Difficulty* and *Pain.* Even our *Work* it ſelf will be *Wages.* And 'tis not only the *End* of Wiſdom that is *pleaſantneſs*, but the *very way*, Prov. 3. 17. So that though we are call'd upon to *ſtrive*, and to *run*, and to *fight*, (which words import Labour) yet we are not required to Quit our *pleaſures*, but to *change* the *objects* of them; to leave the *delights* of *Swine* for *thoſe* of *Angels*; *ſenſual* for *ſpiritual* Satisfactions.

Thus all things encourage, and invite us to *ſtrive*; God calls upon us, and our own *Intereſts* call; *Chriſt Jeſus* came to ingage us to this Work, and the *Holy Spirit* waits to aſſiſt it. If notwithſtanding all this, we *ſit ſtill*, our Negligence will be *inexcuſable* and *fatal:* or if we *ariſe* and go a *little* forward, and then lay us down to take our *eaſe* and *reſt*, our ſtate (in the judgment of

of one that knew) will be worſe, more *deſperate*, and *excuſeleſs*, 2. Pet. 2. 21.

I *Conclude* all then, in the words of the Bleſſed *Apoſtle*, 1. Cor. 15. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord*: To him be Glory and Honour henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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